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FINANCIAL TIMES

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WORLD NEWS

Challenger to be replaced

THE US is to build a space shuttle to replace the Challenger, which crashed in January, the White House said yesterday.

Nasa space agency is to be taken out of the business of launching commercial satellites. It will provide places for the most important payloads already agreed, but it is hoped private corporations will relieve Nasa of most of the backlog.

Nasa payloads will be mainly devoted to national security, foreign policy and space exploration purposes, spokesman Larry Speakes said. Back Page

Jail for hammer attack

Gym mistress Jayne Scott was jailed for seven years at the Old Bailey for attacking deputy headmistress Susan Craker with a hammer, leaving her brain-damaged and paralysed, after finding she was having a sexual relationship with Miss Scott's lover, Debbie Fox.

M15 move criticised

Labour MP Tam Dalyell said the Government was "shameful and dishonest" in trying to prevent publication of a former M15 officer's book in Australia while admitting claims in it of criminality and treachery were true.

Queen Mother unwell

The Queen Mother was admitted to hospital in Aberdeen for tests. She felt unwell after eating fish.

Trail of the Tamils

The 154 Tamil refugees rescued this week off Canada, who said they had come from Sri Lanka, actually sailed from a port on the River Weser, Hamburg police said. Back Page

Gandhi pledge on Sikhs

Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi promised political initiatives and tough police action to stamp out Sikh extremism in the next few months. Page 2

Pakistan violence flares

Violence and anti-government agitation was reported in Pakistan for the third day in a row, following the arrest of all opposition leaders. Page 2

Sanctions for renewal

The White House indicated that President Reagan would renew the limited sanctions he imposed against South Africa last year, and might consider new ones. Page 2

IRA 'obscenities' rapped

Irish Army chief of staff Lt-Gen Tadgh O'Neill condemned the IRA's "murderous obscenities". Page 3

Climbers m...

Six climbers, including Briton Alan Rouse, are missing and feared dead on K2 in the Himalayas, the world's second-highest mountain.

Turkish raid in Iraq

Turkey said its air force bombed Kurdish hide-outs in Iraq, five days after Kurds ambushed and killed 12 Turkish soldiers. Page 2

Church bells ring again

Church bells rang in Peking for the first time since they were banned in 1958.

Wine mountain

Chamonix wine merchant Henri Perrier built a pyramid of 5,000 glasses of champagne—750 litres—to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the conquest of Mont Blanc.

Briefly...

Yugoslavia spent two-thirds of its £1.7bn budget on defence last year.
 Zsa Zsa Gabor, actress, married her eighth husband in Los Angeles.

BUSINESS SUMMARY

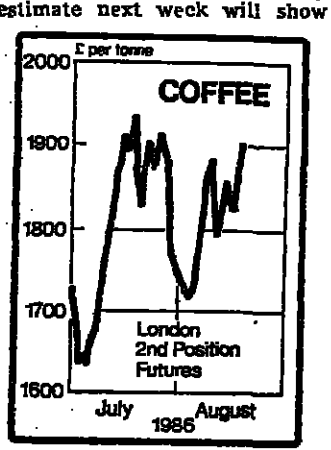
Share price recovery continues

LONDON share prices continued their recovery yesterday, encouraged by the increasing optimism on interest rates.

In active trading the FT-SE index rose by 13.7 to 1601.9, up more than 75 points on the week. The FT Ordinary Share index added 7.8 to 1271.0, a gain of 53.6 on the week—almost reversing the previous week's 56 point fall. Back Page: Stock Exchange, Page 11

COFFEE FUTURES prices rose

sharply in London on rumours that an official Brazilian crop estimate next week will show



that the 1985 drought did more damage to the country's crop than anticipated. The November position ended the day 580 up at £1,902.5 a tonne. Page 11

BRITISH TELECOM made its debut

in the Eurobond market with a \$250m issue, its first long-term borrowing since privatisation in 1984. Back Page

US INDUSTRIAL production fell

by 0.1 per cent in July, its third consecutive monthly fall. Page 2

DENMARK'S finance minister

Mr Palle Simonsen presented the 1987 draft budget and said the government had no plans to change its economic policies to reduce the large current account deficit. Back Page

CEMENT-makers' price-fixing

agreement, cleared by the Restrictive Practices Court in 1982 and 1973, is to be investigated on behalf of the Office of Fair Trading to see if there are grounds for referring the case back to the court. Back Page

TRACTOR production in the UK

fell by almost a fifth in the first six months of this year compared with the same period last year. Page 4

LLOYD'S insurance market

sharply increased the cost of war insurance on oil cargoes in the Gulf in the wake of Tuesday's Iraqi attack on Iran's Sirri Island oil terminal.

CAR OUTPUT in July reflected

a continuing underlying improvement according to Trade and Industry Department estimates. Page 3

ISRAEL'S INFLATION rate was

zero for the month of July, compared with 27.5 per cent the previous July. The annual inflation rate has been around 15 per cent since the government introduced a wage and price freeze a year ago. Tax reform "essential," Page 2

NORWEGIAN oil output could

hit record levels, topping 1m barrels a day within the next year, according to company projections in a Reuters survey.

TRICENTROL, the oil independent,

announced a second quarter loss of £4m after tax, compared to a profit of £6.2m in the same period last year, and will not be paying an interim dividend. Page 8; Lex

AGE RESEARCH, the market

research company, announced annual pre-tax profits down from £9.2m to £7.5m. Page 8

OKLAHOMA'S second largest

bank, Bank of Oklahoma, was rescued by \$130m aid from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Page 9

Rolls-Royce wins engine order for 16 BA Jumbo jets

BY MICHAEL DONNE AND MICHAEL CASSELL

ROLLS-ROYCE has won an order worth well over £600m to supply engines for 16 Jumbo jets destined for service with British Airways. The company's success was in the face of intense competition from General Electric, and Pratt & Whitney of the US.

The engines will go into 16 Boeing 747-400 long-range aircraft and there is an option on 12 additional Jumbos.

The deal (total value is \$2.3bn (£1.54bn)), of which more than £600m will go to Rolls-Royce over the life of the aircraft in service. If the 12 options become firm orders, a total \$4.1bn will be involved.

Mr John Moore, Transport Secretary, has approved the arrangement. The Government stressed yesterday that it had been made solely on commercial grounds—no political pressure had been exerted on BA.

Mr Moore said: "I believe this is good news for the future of BA and Rolls-Royce. Rolls-Royce has shown that British engines can compete in world markets—and win."

Government approval is required for all BA expenditure while the airline remains state-owned. It was clear throughout the long negotiations, however, that BA could not ignore the political consequences of buying a foreign-built engine, in the light of the impending privatisation of both itself and Rolls-Royce.

Although the engine battle is over, a second competition is emerging over who will provide the cash for the purchases. BA will take the aircraft on long-term operating leases and two rival consortia are bidding to supply funds. One is being set up by Goldman Sachs of the US, and the other is believed to include such leading US institutions as Chemical Bank.

Virtually every important bank and aviation financing institution on both sides of the Atlantic is expected to be involved in one group or the other, as is customarily the

case with such large financing deals and especially with an airline as big as BA.

Government ministers were relieved that the decision had gone in favour of Rolls-Royce. They had expected a big political row in the autumn if US engine suppliers had been chosen.

In July Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister, came under pressure in the Commons from Mr Neil Kinnock, the Labour Leader, when he called on the Government to ensure that the national flag-carrier airline bought British.

Mrs Thatcher said Rolls-Royce would have to win the order on merit if it intended to remain an effective and thriving aero-engine manufacturer.

General Electric, which has a working-sharing agreement with Rolls-Royce, had no immediate comment to make on BA's decision.

It is no secret, however, that

Continued on Back Page

Background, Page 3

Volvo, GM to link truck operations in N America

BY KEVIN DONE, NORDIC CORRESPONDENT IN STOCKHOLM

VOLVO OF SWEDEN and General Motors of the US plan to merge their heavy truck operations in North America. The Swedish concern will have majority ownership and operational control.

The companies said yesterday they had signed a memorandum of understanding, with Volvo's stake in the joint venture being at least 65 per cent. The memorandum is not yet legally binding and final agreement is subject to approval by US and Swedish authorities.

The venture, to be called the Volvo GM Heavy Truck Corporation, will be based on Volvo's wholly-owned US subsidiary, Volvo White Truck Corporation, in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the heavy duty truck operations of GM's Truck and Bus Group in Pontiac, Michigan.

It is understood that in addition, General Motors will pay an estimated \$50m to \$75m (£30m to £50m) for its stake in the venture, which will not include GM's light and medium truck and bus operations.

The deal could involve Bedford, General Motors' UK truck subsidiary, which has only a small presence in the heavy truck market.

Volvo, which has a strong record in product development and is one of the most profitable heavy truck makers, entered the US market in 1981, taking over most of the truck manufacturing assets of the White Motor Corporation, which was on the brink of financial collapse.

The merger with GM's heavy truck operations will give the joint venture a potential market share of 15 per cent to 18 per cent, putting it in the same league as Mack, Paccar (Peterbilt and Kenworth) and ahead of the Daimler-Benz freightliner subsidiary, but still some way behind the market leader, Navistar (formerly International Harvester).

Last year Navistar led class eight registrations (heavy duty trucks of more than 15 tonnes) in the US, with 30,085 units. It was followed by Mack, 24,751 units; Paccar, 24,386 units; Freightliner, 18,708 units; Ford 14,327; GMC (General Motors), 11,007; and Volvo/White Autocar, 12,020.

Under the joint venture, the manufacturing operations would be based at Volvo/White's three existing plants in Virginia.

Continued on Back Page

US acquisition gives ICI lead in paint-making

BY TONY JACKSON AND PAUL TAYLOR

ICI HAS become the world's biggest paint maker with the purchase of Glidden of the US from Hanson Trust for \$580m (£390m). Glidden was bought by Hanson as part of its \$930m acquisition of the US conglomerate SCM at the start of the year.

Glidden is the sixth biggest paint company in the world by volume, with sales last year of 285m litres. The previous world leader was PPG (Pittsburgh Paint and Glass) of the US, with 450m litres. ICI, previously third in the world league table, will now be more than half again as large as PPG.

In the year ending June 1986 Glidden had sales of \$655m and pre-tax profits of \$81.2m. ICI said Glidden's average growth in volume between 1982 and 1986 had been 7 per cent—twice the rate of the US market—and profits had grown by an average 18 per cent.

ICI's own paint sales are over \$1.25bn, and it has plants in 26 countries.

ICI said the price/earnings ratio was just over 17, with net assets around \$220m. The purchase, which will be wholly for cash, will raise ICI's ratio of borrowings to assets from 21 per cent to 27 per cent.

Mr Archie Donaldson, group treasurer, said this left plenty of room for further acquisition. "We could do two more like this before reaching our existing borrowing limits," he said. The limits are to be almost doubled, subject to shareholders' agreement, at the start of next month.

Mr Denys Henderson, chairman-elect of ICI and former head of its paint division, said: "We've been tracking Glidden for a year or two. We registered our interest with SCM before their acquisition by Hanson, but they weren't selling. As soon as Hanson bought, we put it to them."

ICI has no direct sales of paint in the US, and Glidden has only 10 per cent of its sales outside its home market. ICI said the deal would make it the world's biggest maker of decorative paints, can coatings and powder coatings. ICI has the option to acquire Glidden's South American business, accounting for the remaining 10 per cent of sales, in the next six months.

The missing link in the deal is access to the US market for automotive paints, where ICI has a technological lead with the new generation of water-borne (as against the more polluting solvent-borne) paints.

Mr Henderson said: "We do not supply Detroit, and we do not rate the chances of starting a greenfields site in the US too highly."

He pointed out that ICI

TOP TEN PAINT PRODUCERS

Annual Output in Millions of Litres

- 1 ICI (UK) 720
- 2 PPG (US) 450
- 3 BASF (W Germany) 440
- 4 Hoechst (W Germany) 320
- 5 Sherwin Williams (US) 300
- 6 Akzo (Netherlands) 270
- 7 Nippon (Japan) 220
- 8 Kansai (Japan) 210
- 9 Dupont (US) 200
- 10 International (UK) 175

Recent acquisitions: Glidden (by ICI) 285m litres; Immont (by BASF) 180m litres approx.

already licenses its water-borne technology to Du Pont and PPG, describing this as "second-best."

Mr Donaldson said the acquisition would contribute a net \$5m a year to ICI profits, after interest costs. ICI's price rose 4 1/2 to £101.

In New York the acquisition of Glidden by ICI was hailed by senior executives from both companies and described by Sir Gordon White, who runs Hanson's US operations, as "an excellent transaction for all parties."

Sir Gordon, who led Hanson's bitter court battle for control of SCM at the end of last year, which in part hinged upon the valuation of SCM assets, said the deal "represents an attractive return on investment for our shareholders and will provide greater flexibility for us to pursue other opportunities."

He also noted that upon completion, Hanson will have raised nearly \$810m through the sale of SCM assets which were acquired for about \$820m. After the sale of Glidden, SCM will continue to be a leading producer of chemicals, including titanium dioxide, which is supplied to Glidden and others, paper, and consumer products, including Smith-Corona typewriters and Duracell batteries.

Mr John Dumbell, Glidden's president, said that a primary attraction of the deal for Glidden was ICI's strong research and development base. ICI's senior US executives expressed confidence that the acquisition will have an immediate positive earnings impact. The deal represented a further significant expansion of ICI's US operations and a key entry into the \$8bn-a-year US coatings and resins market.

Mr Harry Corless, chairman of ICI Americas, ICI's Wilmington, Delaware-based US subsidiary, said as recently as 1982 ICI's US sales had reached \$1bn, and that in only four years this had increased to more than \$2bn.

Background, Page 8; Lex, Back Page

WEEKEND FT



ENDANGERED

Two hundred years after Captaining Iron, landscape gardener, sculptor, Robin Lane Fox makes a new plea for England's green and pleasant land.

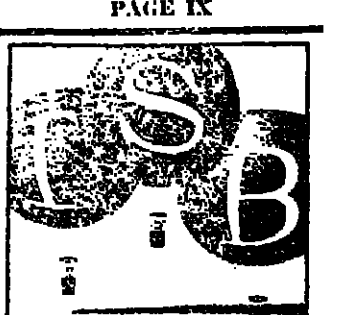
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RETAILING

Two of the nation's most powerful corporations are gearing for autumn. So what's in store?

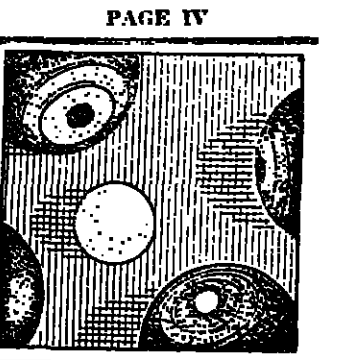
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FINANCE

The £1bn flotation of the Trustee Savings Bank looks sure to go ahead next month. What are its prospects?

PAGE IV



SPORT

Large numbers of sportsmen in one place can spell trouble—but not when they are playing bowls.

PAGE XII

MARKETS

DOLLAR

New York lunchtime:
 DM 2.0618
 FF 6.701
 SF 1.6635
 ¥153.05
 London:
 DM 2.063 (2.062)
 FF 6.705 (6.705)
 SF 1.6625 (1.662)
 ¥154.15 (153.7)
 Dollar index 110.6 (110.5)
 Tokyo close ¥154.3

US LUNCHTIME RATES

Fed Funds 5 1/4 %
 3-month Treasury Bills:
 yield: 5.69 %
 Long Bond: 9 1/4 %
 yield: 7.32 %

GOLD

New York: Comex December
 latest \$300.6
 London: \$382.875 (\$384.76)

STERLING

New York lunchtime \$1.4955
 London: \$1.4945 (1.4935)
 DM 3.0825 (3.08)
 FF 10.02 (10.0175)
 SF 2.485 (2.4825)
 ¥200.25 (200.5)
 Sterling index 71.7 (71.4)

LONDON MONEY

3-month interbank:
 closing rate 95 1/2 (same)

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Argus)
 \$14.35 (\$14)

STOCK INDICES

FT Ord 1271.0 (+7.8)
 FT-A All Share 790.34 (+0.9 %)
 FTSE 100 1,601.9 (+13.7)
 FT-A long gilt yield index:
 3 1/2 coupon 9.50 (9.53)
 New York lunchtime:
 DJ Ind Av 1,848.88 (+1.97)
 Tokyo:
 Nikkei 18,376.41 (+111.7)

Chips price changes yesterday. Back Page

Inflation falls to 2.4% in July

BY GEORGE GRAHAM

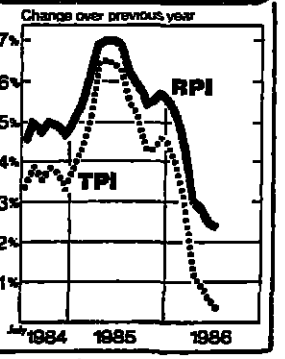
INFLATION SLOWED in July for the seventh consecutive month, dropping to an annual rate of 2.4 per cent, the Employment Department said yesterday. Prices fell by 0.3 per cent in the month as fresh vegetables became cheaper and summer sales cut the price of clothing and household equipment. The drop was the sharpest in a single month since 1967.

The continued fall last month provides a welcome fillip for the Government. Other economic signals have been less encouraging. This week it was announced that manufacturing output remains flat and that unemployment continues to climb.

The Treasury said yesterday that the annual rate of inflation still fell last month, to 3.2 per cent from 3.3 per cent in June, even if mortgage interest rates, which often move the retail price index erratically, were excluded.

Last month's drop was largely the result of a 16.5 per cent decrease in the cost of fresh vegetables, with cauliflowers, carrots, tomatoes and new potatoes all falling in price. Also, lamb dropped by 18p to

Prices and Taxes



20p a pound.

Petrol prices dipped again last month, to an average of £1.62 a gallon. Over the past year the steady slide in petrol prices has directly lowered the rate of inflation by about 0.9 percentage points.

Many forecasters now expect inflation to creep up again towards the year's end. Indeed, many had believed June's rate of 2.5 per cent would prove to be the low point.

Prices in several sectors are thought to be rising this month as summer sales cease, discounts on coal are removed and

public-house beer prices are raised. Also, most leading oil companies have increased petrol prices by 7p a gallon, though only Shell announced its rise in time for the August Retail Price Index.

However, fresh vegetable prices may have fallen further and the annual rate of inflation will decrease if the August increase is less than 0.3 per cent.

The Tax and Price Index, which measures the rise in gross taxable income needed to compensate for the rise in retail prices, last month fell to a level only 0.4 per cent higher than a year earlier.

Ministers are seriously concerned about the continuing rise in average earnings, at an underlying rate of 7 1/2 per cent a year, when for three successive months the Tax and Price Index has shown an annual rate of increase of less than 1 per cent.

The Retail Price Index last month stood at 284.7 (January 1974=100), while the TPI registered 192.1 (January 1973=100).

Editorial Comment, Page 6; Recovery in equities continues, Back Page

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OVERSEAS NEWS

Reagan to renew limited sanctions against S Africa

BY REGINALD DALE, US EDITOR IN WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE yesterday indicated that President Ronald Reagan would renew the limited sanctions that he imposed against South Africa last year and said that the question was whether he would add further anti-apartheid measures.

Mr Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, said that while a final decision had not been made, he would "anticipate certainly" that Mr Reagan would renew the sanctions, which Reagan had not dropped or lessened his opposition to new sanctions, Mr Speakes said. But he would consider what further action might be necessary when renewing the earlier measures.

Mr Speakes' comments came as the Republican-led Senate continued to work towards the adoption of a package of new US economic sanctions, going much further than Mr Reagan's, with a final vote likely later last night.

The vote was expected to put further pressure on Mr Reagan to agree to tougher action against Pretoria.

In a two-day debate, with 30 or more amendments still to be considered, the Senate was sticking broadly to the package proposed by its Foreign Relations Committee, designed to ensure the maximum bipartisan support.

The Senate measures, while stiffer than Mr Reagan's, are much less sweeping than a bill already passed by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives, which would sever virtually all US trade and investment ties with South Africa.

The two bills would have to be reconciled in conference negotiations next month before being sent to Mr Reagan for signature or a veto.

The Senate bill would also renew Mr Reagan's sanctions

of last September, which included restrictions on US loans and sales of computer technology to South Africa, as well as a ban on imports of gold kruggerands.

In addition, the Senate package would ban new US investment in South Africa, bank loans and imports of coal and uranium. It would withdraw US landing rights from South African Airways and bar the South African Government and state-controlled companies from using the US banking system.

In voting on amendments, the Senate has now included a ban on South African textile exports, but narrowly rejected a bid by Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts to include agricultural products and steel.

The Senators also deleted a proposal to urge Mr Reagan to sell US gold stocks to depress the world price and restrictions on US visas for South African officials.

As Congress struggled to complete its business before the three-week August recess, due to start later last night, the House was still ploughing through a \$285bn (£191bn) defence authorisation bill which has enraged the Administration by trying to impose liberal arms control policies that Mr Reagan rejects. A final vote was also expected later last night.

Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Committee voted 24 to 12 to reopen the US Army's \$75m handgun contract with the Italian Beretta company, described by Beretta as "the major pistol contract of the century."

The committee ordered a new competition to allow the American Smith & Wesson company to have another shot at the contract to replace the legendary Colt .45.

S African detainees on hunger strike

By Jim Jones in Johannesburg

MORE THAN 600 South African emergency detainees began hunger strikes yesterday according to lawyers acting on their behalf.

Their lawyers said that 601 emergency prisoners at the Modderbee Prison outside Johannesburg had announced the hunger strikes in a letter smuggled out of prison.

The detainees are protesting at their treatment in prison and in support of demands that the country-wide state of emergency should be lifted and that recent amendments to security legislation be scrapped. Yesterday the prisons service denied that the detainees were on hunger strike.

On Monday a full bench of the Natal Supreme Court in Durban ordered the release of Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, the UDF's Natal publicity secretary, finding that his detention had been unlawful because President P. W. Botha had acted beyond his powers when he issued emergency arrest and detention regulations.

The judgment brought a flood of applications for the release of emergency detainees, a trend stalled on Thursday when a full bench of the Natal Supreme Court sitting in Pietermaritzburg refused a release application and found that the emergency arrest and detention regulations were not unlawful.

The matter has now to be decided by the appellate division in Bloemfontein.

Researchers at the University of the Witwatersrand estimate that rent boycotts by black township residents have cost the state about R1m (£266,000) a day. The Community Research Group says the boycott is about 60 per cent effective and is affecting about 300,000 households in 38 townships in the eastern Cape and the industrial areas of the Southern Transvaal.

In the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area alone the boycott is estimated to have cost the state R185m. In Soweto monthly rent collections are currently running at about one third of their normal R9m.

Zambia 'curbs' trade with Pretoria

By Michael Holman

THE BANK of Zambia has reported yesterday to have introduced curbs on trade with South Africa.

Although no formal statement has been made by the Zambian authorities, bankers and traders said that the country's central bank was no longer providing foreign exchange for letters of credit or invoices covering transactions with Pretoria.

There was speculation that the move was in retaliation for restrictions South Africa last week placed on goods travelling to Zambia, following President Kenneth Kaunda's support of sanctions against Pretoria.

There is likely cause, however, is Zambia's acute shortage of foreign exchange, which may be forcing the Central Bank to restrict imports to essentials. It is unlikely that trade with South Africa, from which the country's vital copper mining sector gets much of its supplies, would be cut off altogether.

The effective collapse of Zambia's agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a two-year SDR 230m loan may have exacerbated the country's economic difficulties. The first tranche was drawn shortly after the agreement was signed in February but there have been no further drawings because of the Government's failure to meet all the terms of the loan.

An important element was the introduction of a foreign exchange auction system, supported by western donors, under which the hard currency available is auctioned each week to the highest bidder. Donors have helped fund the scheme, but their backing has been conditional on compliance with the IMF terms.

Gandhi toughens stance on Sikh extremists

BY JOHN ELLIOTT IN NEW DELHI

THE Indian Government is to combine political initiatives with tough police action in a bid to stamp out violent Sikh extremism within the next few months, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister, said yesterday.

Speaking on the 39th anniversary of the country's independence, he said: "We will not be found lacking in use of force, police action, political will and dedication."

The Prime Minister's tough remarks came at a time when an increase in terrorist attacks by Sikhs has been accompanied by growing police success in arrest-

ing leading extremists in the Sikh home state of Punjab.

Mr Gandhi, who was abroad when a former army chief of staff was assassinated last Sunday, chose yesterday's independence celebrations to pledge fresh action and to build morale among the armed services.

He broke with tradition by broadcasting to the armed forces yesterday evening. "External destabilising forces," he warned, were trying to take advantage of the current "sensitive" situation. "You must renew your pledge to safeguard our nation and combat these forces in fit-

ting manner," he said.

The Indian Government has frequently accused Pakistan, which borders the Indian state of Punjab, of helping to train Sikh extremists. A special security zone is planned by India along this stretch of its border with Pakistan.

Mr Gandhi spoke from the ramparts of Delhi's 17th century Red Fort, standing behind a bullet-proof screen and some of the tightest security seen.

"I am sure that over the next few months we will be able to tackle terrorism and wipe out terrorists completely," he

declared. "This will have to happen soon for we cannot permit this to go on for long."

He also promised to provide adequate protection from extremist attacks for individuals and warned that the "extremists might strike once or twice again" before being eliminated.

A protest day called by a break-away group from the Punjab state's ruling Akali Dal, drew little response yesterday although some black flags and flags of the Sikhs' Khalistan independence movement, were flown in the Punjab.



Gandhi—taking a hard line

John Elliott analyses the implications of this week's clamp-down on the opposition

Pakistan politics back in the melting pot

PAKISTAN'S long history of political instability has entered a new phase of uncertainty with the killing on Thursday by security forces of four protesters in the north-eastern city of Lahore and the arrest in the commercial capital of Karachi and elsewhere of several hundred political activists, including Miss Benazir Bhutto, the country's leading opposition figure.

The clamp-down was ordered by Mr Mohammad Khan Junejo, Prime Minister for the past 17 months, who was picked by the country's president, General Zia-ul-Haq, to ease the country into a form of parliamentary democracy after nine years of military rule.

But the action may, ironically, have done Miss Bhutto more good than harm because it has probably turned the popularity bandwagon she has ridden since she returned to the country in April into a real political campaign, sharpening the focus of her battle with the Government and enlarging her political base. This week, Miss Bhutto had failed to make the transition to a political campaign and so was making relatively little headway with her demands for elections before the due date of 1980.

The Government's opposition now seem larger. Opposition parties, which had planned a September campaign to oust President Zia have now decided to begin their action on Monday.

The government crack-down raises a number of questions.

Has Mr Junejo, with his lack of political experience, allowed the security forces to over-react and has he created a bigger crisis than the Government expected? Or is it all part of a strategy carefully thought out by President Zia to which Mr Junejo may or may not have been privy?

Any assessment is complicated by the fact that President Zia, one of the world's most capable political strategists, is out of the country following the paths of devout Muslims on a Haj pilgrimage to Mecca. He appears to be in no danger of being ousted in a coup and will presumably be able to disclaim responsibility for what has happened when he returns.

President Zia came to power in 1977 when he ousted President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Miss Bhutto's father, who was later executed. President Zia ruled as Martial Law Administrator until the beginning of this year when martial law was lifted. By then Prime Minister Junejo had already been installed in a newly elected but non-party national assembly.

Throughout this period President Zia skillfully followed his instincts, tempered by the views of fellow top generals whose personal ambitions he adroitly checked, and influenced by the US, which has seen Pakistan as a front-line buffer state against Communism since the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979.



Benazir Bhutto: under arrest

But at the end of last year he uncharacteristically changed tack on two counts which now take on significance. First, he was persuaded by Mr Junejo to allow political parties to operate, despite his own wish for them to remain in the background until the run-up to the 1980 elections. Mr Junejo argued the assembly could not be controlled without the mechanism of a party, and formed a new Muslim League which is now the governing party.

Miss Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) boycotted the elections last year so is not represented in the parliament. She has been demanding early

elections and Mr Junejo's initiative both increased her freedom to operate and lent logic to her argument.

Such elections, however, would probably give the PPP a victory and return Miss Bhutto as Prime Minister, despite splits within her own party.

The second point on which President Zia changed tack was his publicly-declared intention to retire as Chief of Army Staff within a few days of martial law ending. He decided to retain the post, acting as he put it, as a "bridge" between martial law and a democratic regime. His decision may have been based on the realisation that relaxing the ban on political parties could cause problems. It means that this weekend he is in supreme control of the military, even though Mr Junejo is Minister of Defence as well as Prime Minister.

President Zia's main problem for the future is that he and Miss Bhutto could not co-exist as President and Prime Minister. She would almost certainly have to put him on trial for alleged constitutional and other offences and has indicated she would prefer him to spare her the embarrassment by quietly leaving the country.

Initially President Zia hoped her popular appeal would wane once initial curiosity at her return diminished. That has not happened, so once it became

clear her political bandwagon would continue to roll, he was faced with three basic inter-linked options.

The first would be for Miss Bhutto to come to power by popular demand in 1980 or earlier. In such circumstances, General Zia would choose an opportune moment to retire abroad, presumably looking after the US. His successors at the top of the army could then decide themselves whether to allow her to stay in power or stage another coup.

The second option would be for the PPP to come to power but without Miss Bhutto as its leader. This would probably mean sending her to the exile from which she returned in April. President Zia might then be able to retire at home.

The third would be to reintroduce martial law, first putting her under house arrest again.

The events of the last few days have, intentionally or unintentionally, started a movement in line with the third option. This has undermined the democratic validity of the Junejo government.

It should soon become clear whether the opposition can use the new situation to build up an effective political campaign—and whether that leads to more repression and a reintroduction of martial law—or whether the ever-powerful army is prepared to permit early elections, perhaps with President Zia returning abroad.

US industrial production shows continuing decline

BY NANCY DUNNE IN WASHINGTON

depths of the last recession, US industrial production has fallen for three consecutive months. The Federal Reserve Board yesterday said the industrial output of US factories, mines and utilities slipped 0.1 per cent last month, after declining 0.3 per cent in June and 0.5 per cent in May.

The last time industrial production fell for three consecutive months was August, September and October 1982. This new indication of economic sluggishness could pave the way for a lowering of central bank interest rates.

Mr Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, interpreted the output drop as "mainly due to the falling energy prices in all levels of production."

He was clearly more enthusiastic however about yesterday's Labour Department report that lower energy prices last month had pushed July wholesale prices down 0.4 per cent. American consumers, said Mr Speakes, "can benefit from lower prices

without fears of rekindled inflation."

For the first seven months of the year, wholesale prices fell at an annual rate of 6.2 per cent. However, there are indications that prices may be heading for more trouble. The devastating southeast drought has already begun to affect food costs. Poultry prices were 15 per cent from July 1985, pork prices were 14 per cent higher and fresh fruit was up 5 per cent.

The August 5 agreement by members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries to slow oil production has already nudged up US wholesale petrol prices, but the effects are still to be seen in future indicators.

A Chase Econometrics forecaster said that the slow growth of wages is sustainable only as long as prices keep falling. Otherwise, a new outburst of consumer buying cannot be expected to boost the economy later this year.

Economic outlook threat to US tax reform

BY NANCY DUNNE IN WASHINGTON

THE HOUSE-SENATE compromise on tax reform, which looked so hopeful on Thursday, was in jeopardy yesterday after congressional tax experts produced forecasts of a slowdown in the economy which will require \$17bn (£11bn) more in revenues over the next five years.

The two leaders of the tax reform conference committee—Congressman Dan Rostenkowski and Senator Bob Packwood—spent Wednesday alone together agreeing to make up a shortfall in revenues by raising \$124bn to \$129bn over the next five years through corporate taxes.

The original House Tax Bill would have raised \$178bn from

the business sector over the five-year period, but the Senate conferees, who had worked on the basis of about \$93bn in corporate taxes, worry that large tax increases on business may tip the economy into recession.

The negotiators had hoped to finish the tax package over the weekend, before Congress is scheduled to begin a three-week recess.

Senator Packwood expressed frustration that "the numbers have changed three times in six weeks through nobody's fault."

"I'm just not sure where we go from here," he said. Referring to Mr Rostenkowski, he added: "He and I almost cried last night."

Turkey bombs Kurdish groups in Iraq

By David Barchard in Ankara

TURKISH Air Force fighters carried out bombing raids on Kurdish hide-outs in Iraq this week, according to a brief government statement issued in Ankara yesterday.

The bombing comes five days after a Kurdish terrorist group killed 12 Turkish soldiers, including an army major, in an ambush at Ortayayir near the Iraqi border.

The statement said the bombing had been carried out because Kurdish terrorists were fleeing across the frontier, under the terms of an agreement between Turkey and Iraq three years ago. Turkey is thought to have used the agreement only once before in May 1984 when it staged a military incursion against Kurdish groups in Iraq.

MR BULENT Ecevit, Turkey's former Social Democratic Prime Minister, is again facing the possibility of a long jail sentence. The public prosecutor in the Black Sea town of Karabuk announced yesterday that he was instituting criminal proceedings against the 60-year-old ex-premier for activities contrary to the constitution and the political parties law.

If convicted, Mr Ecevit could face up to seven years in jail.

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Finland lowers rate of markka

THE Bank of Finland yesterday lowered its call money rate from 35 to 25 per cent after the markets showed further confidence in the Finnish markka, reports Oil Virtanen from Helsinki. The rate has now come down three times in two successive days from the record level of 40 per cent.

Paris redraws electoral map

BY DAVID MARSH IN PARIS

THE FRENCH right-wing government has presented to the Elysee Palace compromise proposals on changes to the electoral system, designed to avoid another constitutional clash with Socialist President Francois Mitterrand.

Mr Charles Pasqua, the Interior Minister, has submitted to Mr Mitterrand in the past few days a new "electoral map" of France redrawing constituency boundaries. The exercise is part of preparations for a return to the traditional French electoral system of majority or "first past the post" voting for the next National Assembly elections.

Mr Mitterrand will now have

to decide whether to sign a government decree defining the new constituencies. The decree is due to be presented at a cabinet meeting on September 10.

A presidential refusal to sign would provoke more strains with Mr Jacques Chirac, the Prime Minister.

In a successful attempt to limit losses of the Socialist Party at the last elections in March, Mr Mitterrand brought about a switch to proportional representation.

In line with it pledge to repeal Mr Mitterrand's move, the right used its small National Assembly majority in May to steamroller through a law reimposing majority voting.

However, the delicate question of redefining constituencies under the new system—which could give the right considerable advantages in the next election—has been rigorously examined during the summer by the Constitutional Council, France's highest legal body.

The basic law re-implementing majority voting gives the Government necessary authorisation to reshape the electoral map without going again through the National Assembly.

But following a ruling last month from the Constitutional Council, the latest constituency proposals have been tightened up to try to avoid any charges that Mr Pasqua is resorting to gerrymandering.

Peres accepts the need for tax reform measures

BY ANDREW WHITLEY IN JERUSALEM

TAX REFORM in Israel is "essential" if economic growth is to take place, Prime Minister Shimon Peres said yesterday. Israeli personal and corporate taxation rates are among the highest in the world.

The Israeli leader was responding to a private message sent earlier this month by Mr George Shultz, in which the US Secretary of State urged a series of sweeping economic reforms, reported to include the privatisation of state companies, changes in the capital markets and a new tax code.

According to the state-run Israel Radio, Mr Shultz warned that economic growth in Israel would be stalled unless "corrective measures" were implemented. Disclosure of the Shultz message comes on the eve of a trip to Washington by Mr Moshe Nissim, the Finance Minister.

Mr Peres also announced the convening of another ministerial committee on economic growth, this time charged with examining the Shultz proposals. Two other committees with similar briefs have been at work in the past six months.

Last year the US made its provision of emergency economic assistance totalling \$1.4bn (£940m) conditional on the restructuring of the state-dominated Israeli economy.

Except for a final tranche of \$375m, all of this aid has now been disbursed. But apart from a reduction in consumer goods subsidies, most of the promised reforms are still to be implemented.

Yesterday the president of the Chambers of Commerce Association presented the Labour Prime Minister with a plan to reduce the tax burden by between 25 and 40 per cent.

Malta greets visiting British navy frigate

By Godfrey Grima in Valletta

HMS BRAZEN, the British Royal Navy frigate, was given a tumultuous welcome by the Maltese yesterday as she arrived on a week's courtesy visit.

The frigate, the first Royal Navy vessel to enter Malta since the complete closure of British military installations on the island seven years ago, will participate in celebrations marking the arrival of an allied supplies wartime convoy 44 years ago.

More than 7,000 people lined the ramparts leading into Valletta to greet the frigate, which fired a 21-gun salute on entering Grand Harbour.

HMS Brazen was invited to Malta by the island's current Prime Minister, Dr Carmelo Mifsud Bonnici, who, in the 20 months he has been in power, has tried to restore Malta's ties with western Europe.

Toshiba buys toner powders plant in US

By Carla Rapoport in Tokyo

TOSHIBA, a leading Japanese electronics company, yesterday announced plans to boost its position in the US copier market by purchasing a toner powders and developer plant from 3M of the US.

The two companies said yesterday that Toshiba would buy the 3M plant in Mitchell, South Dakota, for an undisclosed sum. The Japanese company will retain the current employees and has agreed to invest \$7.6m in it over the next four years.

The move is somewhat unusual as Japanese companies usually prefer to build their own plants in overseas locations, rather than take over existing facilities.

Toshiba said yesterday that its current Japanese toner suppliers in the US were providing lower quality goods.

Japan warned over exports

By Ian Rodger in Tokyo

JAPAN's economy is doomed to stagnate until ways are found to replace exports as a source of growth, according to the Japanese Government's Economic Planning Agency (EPA).

The agency, devoting this year's white paper on the economy to an analysis of the effects of the yen's appreciation and the drop in crude oil prices, joins a lengthening list of analysts who say Japan can no longer rely on exports for growth.

To stimulate domestic demand, it suggests major infrastructure developments and, in particular, the redevelopment of the large cities which are overcrowded and poorly planned. It also urges industrialists to concentrate on software and services and to think about new markets that might develop in the next few years as the proportion of elderly people in Japan rises sharply.

Alexandria's appeal soured by the stench of sewage

BY TONY WALKER IN CAIRO



Lawrence Durrell—found his last visit "dispiriting"

ALEXANDRIA: Long sequences of tempera. Light filtered through the essence of lemons. An air full of brick-dust—sweet-smelling brick-dust and the odour of hot pavements slaked with water.

SUCH WERE the smells of summer that lingered in the memory of Lawrence Durrell who celebrated Alexandria as it was in his imagination in the elegiac work "The Alexandria Quartet."

A quarter of a century later a different smell greets the visitor. Bluntly put, the city on the shores of the Mediterranean has been afflicted by an excess of raw sewage that last summer fouled the waters and

came to rest on the beaches.

And while officials insist that the problem has been solved, there are many Alexandrians who do not share such optimism. Their memories of the disastrous summer of 1985 are too painful for them to be easily convinced that the waters off Egypt's second city will soon return to an unadulterated state.

It is doubtful that Justice and the other nymphs of Durrell's creation could flourish in Alexandria as it is today. Indeed, the author himself in 1977, on his last visit to the city, found it a "dispiriting exercise."

"So once again, Alexandria has sunk into its oblivion, and

I must be forgiven for finding that the present town is depressing beyond endurance—especially when one thinks of the treasures of Cairo, or the tremendous outburst of vegetation and monuments which gives upper Egypt its resonance," he wrote in an introduction to E. M. Forster's small classic guide book about the city.

Durrell's fertile imagination could not cope, it seems, with modern Alexandria. Middle-age had added loss to memories of youthful adventure and caused disappointment.

Like Shanghai, a city with which it has much in common, Alexandria's appeal puts demands on the imagination. Still,

the appeal is there, behind the dust and squalor, in the rooco buildings, in the broad sweep of the Mediterranean as it touches the shores, in the grounds of the palace at Montazah (where King Farouk had his summer residence) and in the glimmers of life in a city suspended between Europe and the Orient.

Before Col Gamal Abdel Nasser, Egypt's post 1952 revolution leader, brought the full weight of socialism to bear and put most of a very large foreign community to flight, Alexandria had attained a glittering status as one of the playgrounds of the Mediterranean before Beirut usurped the role.

"The long flirtation of Nasser

with communism had produced the inevitable deadening effect," commented Durrell in 1977. "Now a leaden uniformity rules."

That judgment seems unreasonable today. True, Alexandria has seen better times and those in pursuit of exotic pleasures may be disappointed, but a little of the essence remains, nurtured by Alexandrians themselves whose demeanour reflects a cosmopolitan past. If nothing else, the city remains a magnet to tens of thousands of Egyptians.

Each summer when the heat of Cairo becomes oppressive there is an exodus to Alexandria. A million and a half Egyptians find their way to the

coastal city, swelling its numbers by one-third.

Last year, however, numbers of visitors were down by more than half, frightened away by Alexandria's odiferous reputation.

In Alexandria's once-smart salons, talk these days seems to focus obsessively on whether the authorities have dealt with "the problem," as it is called.

A professor of planning at Alexandria University insisted that technically "the problem" was solved. Raw sewage had stopped flowing into the Lake Maryout, an evil-smelling accretion of waste on the fringes of the city.

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Irish army chief of staff attacks IRA 'obscenities'

BY HUGH CARRNEY IN DUBLIN

THE CHIEF of Staff of the Irish army, Lieutenant-General Tadgh O'Neill, in an unusual public attack by a figure who by convention eschews political statements, has condemned what he called the "murderous obscenities" carried out by the Irish Republican Army.

"I hate that they call themselves Irishmen. They are a disgrace and their use of the word 'army' is in my throat," General O'Neill told a group of part-time soldiers who were inspecting at a summer camp in western Ireland.

He said there was no difference between the IRA and Sinn Féin, its political wing. He criticised in particular the IRA's recent threat to kill any civilian working for the security forces in Northern Ireland. He said a recent IRA murder victim had also done work for the Irish army.

General O'Neill's remarks reflect the Irish establishment view that the IRA poses as much of a threat to political

stability in the Republic as it does in Northern Ireland and Britain, a view that has increasingly been aired since the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement last November.

Dublin believes an arms commitment for the IRA from Chicago intercepted in parcels at a Dublin post office on Wednesday would have been of special significance to the IRA as it included a powerful Barrett M82 semi-automatic rifle capable of shooting down a helicopter. Having the means to attack British helicopters operating on the Northern Ireland border would be a considerable breakthrough for the IRA.

In Belfast yesterday, the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, and Peter Robinson, his deputy, said they and their supporters would be applying for compensation to the Irish authorities for injuries and damage sustained in clashes with Repub-

licans in the border town of Dundalk on Thursday where Mr Robinson appeared in court. He faces disorder charges arising from his arrest during a Loyalist incursion into the Republic last week.

Mr Paisley said he would lodge an official complaint to Sir Jack Hermon, Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, over the removal last week of police protection for Mr Robinson and his family.

Mr Paisley and Mr Robinson said they were taking legal advice about remarks on television by Mr Michael Noonan, the Republic's acting Justice Minister, that their supporters and supporters of the IRA were allies in waiting to stir up trouble to wreck the Anglo-Irish accord. The DUP leaders believe the comments could prejudice Mr Robinson's trial.

Yesterday, the IRA claimed responsibility for the death of a man in west Belfast. It said he had been an IRA member who became a police informer.

Government rejects accusations over TSB

By Michael Cassell

THE POLITICAL dispute over the TSB Group flotation was yesterday again stepped up when Sir Patrick Mayhew, Solicitor-General, rejected Labour accusations that the Government was giving away £1bn of state assets by allowing the share issue to proceed.

He was responding to a letter from Mr John Morris, Labour legal affairs spokesman, who wrote to Sir Michael Havers, Attorney-General, asking whether he agreed with the Treasury view that the TSB, due to be floated next month, is not owned by the Government.



Roy Hattersley: parliamentary debate call

Labour leaders say the flotation has been undermined by a Law Lords' ruling that TSB assets belong to the Government, and could, therefore, have been taken by the Treasury by way of privatisation.

The Government rejected Labour's interpretation of the Law Lords' ruling that it has proceeded with sale plans on the basis that ownership of the four trust savings banks has never been legally defined and that they should be permitted to keep their reserves.

Labour accepts that it will be hard pressed to stop the flotation proceeding but is pushing on with its campaign to secure postponement of the issue until parliament can debate the matter.

Mr Roy Hattersley, shadow Chancellor, said Sir Patrick's letter supporting the Government's view acknowledged that parliament had been free to dispose of TSB assets as it saw fit.

However, Mr Hattersley said MPs had not been made aware of this before the summer recess.

Sir Patrick, in his letter to Mr Morris, said that in the Law Lords' judgment Lord Templeman had ruled that TSB assets belonged to the state. It did not follow that they should accrue to the Exchequer.

The taxpayer had never contributed to them and there was a body of depositors who felt so strongly that the surplus assets were their property that they had taken their claim to the House of Lords.

Sir Patrick said that on abolition of the TSBs and their central board "there would be no legal personality entitled to their assets and parliament was entirely free to dispose of them as it thought fit."

Mr Morris's assertion that some basic premise of the TSB Bill had been undermined was unsustainable.

However, Mr Hattersley said Sir Patrick's letter clearly stated that parliament had the right to dispose of TSB assets as it saw fit.

Mr Hattersley said the fact that the TSB sale proceeds could have gone to the Treasury only became clear after the Law Lords' full judgment.

He demanded flotation be delayed until Parliament could debate the issue.

Michael Donne examines British Airways' decision to buy the RB-211 Chocks away for R-R jet engine

BRITISH AIRWAYS' decision to buy the Rolls-Royce RB-211-524D4D jet engines for 16 Boeing 747-400 long-range airliners, worth in all \$2.3bn (£1.54bn) was one of the closest contests yet seen in an increasingly competitive market for these expensive "high-thrust" engines.

BA's choice of aircraft was never in doubt. To replace its existing ageing long-range Jumbo jet fleet, only the latest version of the Boeing 747—the Series 400—was suitable. The question was the number of aircraft involved.

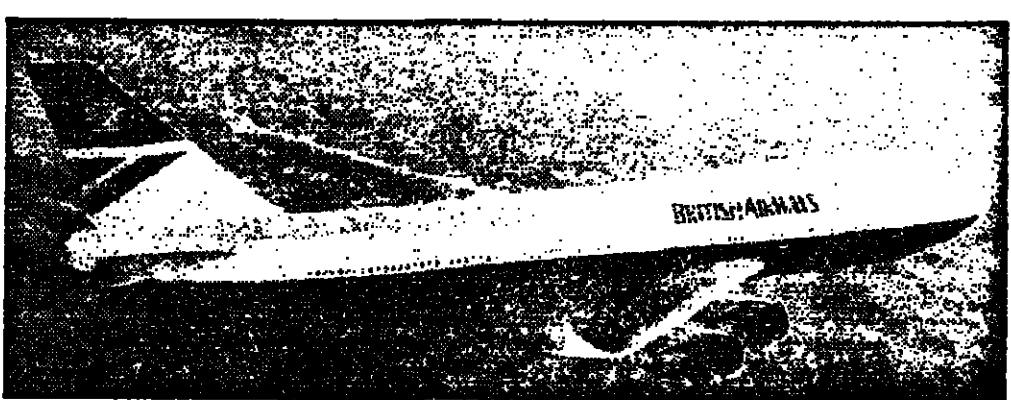
In the event, BA has settled on an initial 16, to be delivered between spring 1989 and the end of 1990, to replace its 16 existing 747-130s, some of which have been in service since the early 1970s. There is also an option on another 12 aircraft.

The engine choice was the principal battlefield, with all of the "big three" manufacturers involved—Rolls-Royce with its RB-211-524D4D, General Electric of the US with its CF6-80C2, and Pratt & Whitney also of the US, with its FV-4000. All engines produce about 58,000 lb thrust.

BA admits the contest was keenly fought, with the margin between all three engines "down to a hair's breadth."

But most interest centred on the Rolls-Royce and GE engines because of the agreement on engine development between these two companies. This agreement, signed some time ago, gives Rolls-Royce a 15 per cent stake in the manufacture and sale of the General Electric CF6-80C2 engine, rising to 25 per cent by January 1989.

In return, GE gets a 15 per cent share, rising to 25 per cent. The smaller Rolls-Royce engine, the RB-211-535E4, used in the Boeing 757 twin-engine short-to-medium range jet airliner—an arena in which GE has nothing of its own to offer.



An impression of the new British Airways Boeing 747-400 with Rolls-Royce engines

In recent weeks, the pact has been widely misinterpreted, and it has been suggested that by competing with GE in the bid for the BA engine order, Rolls-Royce was violating its agreement with GE, causing anger and distrust to the US company.

This was not the case. The Rolls-Royce/GE agreement does not prevent Rolls-Royce from developing and marketing its D4D version of the RB-211-524, even in competition with GE, specifically for the Boeing 747 market. GE's benefits from the agreement come solely from the marketing value of the smaller 535-E4 engine.

The fact that, so far, the sales of that engine have been slower than expected is irrelevant. The benefits will emerge as and when the market for the Boeing 747 starts to expand, as most observers believe it will.

In the meantime, Rolls-Royce is free to develop and market its bigger 524-D4D engine in competition with GE's CF6-80C2 whenever and wherever it can, while also enjoying the benefits of its share of the latter engine's sales.

Recently, Mr Ralph Robins, managing director of Rolls-Royce, said a successful bid for the BA order would confirm the 524-D4D's status in the world market, and lead to sales of

several hundred engines in the years ahead.

Conversely, although Mr Robins did not say it, failure to win the BA deal would have virtually killed the 524-D4D in world markets. No airline elsewhere would have bought a British engine that Britain's state airline did not want.

Accordingly, the BA deal was critical to Rolls-Royce, and it had to pull out everything it had to win it. Initially, according to sources inside BA, Rolls-Royce played the contest in a low key. So low, in fact, that one high-level BA spokesman declared that Rolls-Royce initially only helded "a second eleven."

It is claimed that it was not until the consequences of losing were fully spelled out to Rolls-Royce's top management that "all the stops were pulled out."

From then on, the battle was fought on a highly professional basis, and BA openly expressed admiration for the vigour and determination with which both sides presented their cases.

BA's decision was based on a wide range of factors. All finally added up in Rolls-Royce's favour. The basic price of the engine, the marginally better fuel consumption in air-line service and the better

long-term savings on in-service maintenance and overhaul costs.

BA denies the UK Government put political pressure on it to give the order to Rolls-Royce. Nevertheless, the BA board could not fail to be aware of the serious political consequences of awarding the order to GE, in a time when both Rolls-Royce and BA are in the run-up to privatisation in the first half of next year.

MPs of all parties would have been increased had the decision gone overseas and the Government would have been seriously embarrassed.

There would have been serious questions about BA's decision to buy Rolls-Royce engines still have not 15 per cent, rising to 25 per cent, of the overall value of the deal, through its pact with GE.

Now, Rolls-Royce can tackle other world markets, with the security of the BA deal behind it. As Mr Robins has said, it hopes and expects that now the BA deal is settled, many other airlines will follow BA's example and sign orders which Rolls-Royce has been negotiating for some time.

The result will be continuing big business for the company's high-thrust jet engine through to the end of the century, and continuity of employment at its Derby factories.

Car output figures point to upturn

By John Griffiths

CAR PRODUCTION in July reflected an underlying improvement evident since the spring, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Nevertheless, July's production figure of 84,000, seasonally adjusted, was 1,000 below the figure for July last year, according to the department's provisional estimates.

In the first half of this year, output was down 8 per cent compared with the same half of 1985. Taking the latest six months from February to July, however, it was down 6 per cent.

Commercial vehicle production, at a seasonally-adjusted 19,000 last month, was again down sharply compared with the 22,200 produced a year ago. For the latest six-month period, output was down 8 per cent on the preceding six months.

The department's statistics for commercial vehicles in July further compounded the gloom in the industry, illustrated by statistics from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

The figures, covering the first six months of the year, show that commercial vehicle output (not seasonally adjusted) was down nearly 23 per cent in the first half, compared with the first half of last year.

The SMMT's comparison for cars, on a year-on-year basis, showed output down slightly less than 10 per cent in the first six months.

Elida Gibbs to sell distribution centre at Leeds

By Lisa Wood

ELIDA GIBBS, the toiletries subsidiary of Unilever, is to sell its distribution centre near Leeds to Tibbett & Britten, the specialist transport group which came to the Stock Exchange a month ago.

Tibbett & Britten, formed in 1983 in a management buy-out when Unilever decided to dispose of its core businesses, will be contracted to take over distribution of Elida Gibbs' products and to exploit any spare capacity by taking on additional business at the centre.

The contracting out of distribution is a growing trend among retailers and manufacturers. Another Unilever subsidiary, Birds Eye Walls, is talking with distribution companies with the aim of contracting out all its distribution.

Married woman barred from jobless scheme

By David Brindle

THE EQUAL Opportunities Commission has lost an industrial tribunal case which could have made married women eligible for places on the Community Programme scheme for the long-term unemployed.

A Sheffield tribunal has ruled that Mrs Judith Chandler, who was appointed by the commission, should be excluded from the programme because her husband's earnings made her ineligible for state benefits.

Under Employment Department regulations introduced in 1984, only people eligible for state benefits are able to join the programme. The commission claims this constitutes indirect sex discrimination against married women.

The tribunal said yesterday the commission's decision meant unemployed married women, particularly those with out-of-work skills, would continue to

be unfairly excluded from one of the Government's main employment schemes.

"This obviously has particular relevance to women returning to work after a break for family responsibilities," the commission said. "Indeed, a significant share of places in the first couple of years of the scheme went to women returning to work after a long absence."

The tribunal accepted the Government's argument that, while married women were hit hardest by the change in regulations, this was justifiable because it was the fairest way of helping those most in need.

The decision reverses an earlier tribunal ruling, subsequently annulled, that the changed regulations did constitute unlawful discrimination. The commission is considering an appeal.

NFU welcomes scheme to conserve 'sensitive areas'

FINANCIAL TIMES REPORTER

THE Government's move to protect six threatened landscapes by designating them as environmentally sensitive areas met with a cautious welcome yesterday from farming and conservation organisations.

The National Farmers' Union said it hoped the scheme, which will involve paying farmers to adopt practices that do not harm the rural environment, would succeed. But it said it would be necessary to provide adequate money and staff.

Mr Fred Elliott, chairman of the union's parliamentary committee, said: "Farmers who take part will have to comply with defined management practices on their land. If we are to attract them into the scheme, the Minister (of Agriculture) must provide a realistic balance between the practices required and the incentives offered."

Six sites were designated this week as sensitive areas. They are: the Norfolk Broads, the Somerset Levels and Moors, the

Pennine Dales, West Penwith, and the eastern half of the South Downs.

Sir Derek Barber, chairman of the Countryside Commission, said: "In these areas, government agricultural policy and environmental interests go hand-in-hand. I very much hope that farmers will join in the management schemes and take up the payments the Government will be offering."

The Government's move, which will involve expenditure of up to £6m a year, follows intense criticism in recent years of intensive farming practices.

Mr Michael Jopling, the Minister of Agriculture, said this week that farmers would be offered money—perhaps £50 a hectare or more—to continue traditional farming practices and thus conserve wildlife and landscape beauty.

However, many farmers are deeply sceptical about the likely benefits of the scheme.

Oil futures study set up

By Lucy Kellaway

LONDON'S International Petroleum Exchange has set up a special advisory committee as a first step towards establishing a crude oil futures contract.

The committee, which had its first meeting this week, will examine the feasibility of developing a contract based on 600,000 barrels of North Sea Brent Oil delivered to Sullom Voe in the Shetland Islands.

The IPE, which was set up in 1981, has been trying for three years to create a working futures market for crude oil. Its first two attempts, launched in 1983, and again last year, both

failed. The contracts failed to catch the market's imagination.

So far, the exchange has only one working contract, which is based on gas oil. This has come into its own recently, as it has been used as a hedge against very volatile oil prices. Last week, record volumes were recorded.

In October the exchange will introduce two further contracts, based on gasoline and heavy fuel oil, which added to the existing gas oil contract will give traders a full range of refined products against which to hedge.

There have been delays in the discussions.

The department yesterday confirmed its view that the regulations, as drafted, fulfilled the Government's intention.

Mr Wild has called upon the Government to amend the regulations so that the position is made clear—a view shared by the accountancy profession and the NAFF.

The department is adamant that no revision is required. Touche Ross has advised its clients that in the event of doubt on the regulations, they should seek legal advice.

There are more than 80,000 company pension schemes in the US and the pensions industry is still in the process of assessing the costs of the disclosure requirements. These could run into millions of pounds, even with the year's grace. If the regulations had to be implemented immediately, costs would be much higher.

Row over pension fund draft regulations

By Eric Short

SLIPSHOD drafting of legislation is again causing problems for the accountancy profession. Accountants, already up in arms over the drafting of the 1986 Finance Act, have now covered what they consider to be a flaw in the recently-issued Disclosure Regulations made under the 1985 Social Security Act.

The regulations are intended to ensure that employees are provided with details of their company pension scheme, including its financial position, by way of a full set of reports and accounts produced every year in a similar manner to company accounts.

The regulations come into force on November 1 1986 and the intentions of the Government is that pension schemes will have a year's grace to introduce the necessary systems and administration to produce details on a regular basis.

Pension scheme accounts would be required for the first

annual year starting on or after November 1 1986. This intention is confirmed by the Department of Health and Social Security.

However, according to Mr Ken Wilde, a partner in the accountancy firm Touche Ross, the wording of the regulation implies that accounts have to be produced for the year ending on or after November 1 1986.

The implications of this interpretation of the regulations are serious enough for those pension schemes which produce annual accounts since many schemes will have to change the format to conform with the Regulations. For example many schemes show only book value of investments, whereas the regulations require them to show market value.

Many smaller schemes, however, do not even produce audited accounts.

It would throw a tremendous strain on auditors to have to

produce accounts for the current year without any warning.

Mr Wild queried this interpretation with the DHSS and was assured that the intention of the regulations was to provide a year's grace and that this was fully reflected in the drafting. The DHSS said that if Touche Ross was in any doubt it should take legal advice.

Touche Ross did so and a leading firm of city lawyers confirmed its interpretation. The accountancy profession is perturbed over the wording and is in consultation with the DHSS.

The National Association of Pension Funds confirmed that it has been in discussions with the department over many aspects, including timing, since the regulations were issued. It has made a similar interpretation to that made by Touche Ross.

Because of the holiday season

Shareholders bail out wingsail maker

By Tony Jackson

WALKER WINGSAIL, the maker of Britain's first wingsail for merchant ships, is back in business after closing its doors at the end of last month.

Mr John Walker, managing director, said work had resumed almost immediately, with only six workers instead of the original 15, after an appeal to shareholders realised almost £70,000.

"It was an interim funding—a kind of informal rights issue," Mr Walker said. "We asked each shareholder to contribute as much as they could afford, and they rallied round."

The factory, at Hamble in Hampshire, produced a prototype earlier this year after 20 years of development.

Indian curry and Chinese vegetable 'sales surging'

By Laurie Ludwick

INDIAN CURRY and Chinese vegetables are enjoying surging sales as demand for innovative and convenient food products grows, says a report on last year's food and drinks market.

Frozen specialty dishes are pushing sales of traditional favourites such as beef stew and dumplings. Findus Foods reports growth of 124 per cent for pasta, 54 per cent for curries and 35 per cent for Chinese food.

Chilled meals remain one of the most dynamic growth areas in the whole food industry, says the report. It is estimated that the £92m market will grow 16 per cent annually over the next five years, to £104m in 1990.

Chilled foods, particularly those by Marks and Spencer, appeal to the health-conscious

consumer because they are fresh and can be made without preservatives, says the report.

Running against the trend towards low-calorie healthy eating is the growth of luxury items, such as cream and chilled desserts. The indulgence factor has contributed to a changing pattern in eating habits. Fresh double cream accounted for 50 per cent of the total £124m cream market last year.

Predictably, yoghurt continued to show fast growth last year. The low-fat food market grew by 23 per cent.

Opportunities in the UK Food and Drinks Market: June 1988. Leatherhead Food Research Association, Randalls Road, Leatherhead, Surrey.

Probe into beer supply set to start

By Our Consumer Affairs Correspondent

THE Monopolies and Mergers Commission is expected next week formally to start work on an investigation into the supply of beer for sale on licensed premises, including Britain's unique system of tied pub houses.

The investigation was announced two weeks ago by Sir Gordon Brown, director general of fair trading. There has been speculation that the Government might use its veto to block the probe, but that would be unprecedented.

Mr Paul Channon, Trade and Industry Secretary, would not be involved as he has family interests in the brewing industry.

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Tractor production falls by a fifth

BY NICK GARNETT

TRACTOR plant output slumped by almost a fifth in the first six months of this year compared with the same period last year. This reflects the continuing worldwide downturn in demand for agricultural equipment.

Falling sales have meant layoffs or redundancies at all three big UK-based producers, Massey-Ferguson, Ford and Case International. It also casts further doubt over the long-term future of Case's plant at Meltham near Huddersfield, over which there has been speculation for the past year.

The UK ranks alongside Italy as the world's biggest producer of wheeled agricultural tractors outside the Soviet Union and China. Some 80 per cent of tractors made in the UK are exported. The balance of the trade in tractors, including parts and accessories, was £328m last year—one of the

healthiest sectors in the UK economy.

Last year the UK produced 88,000 tractors. According to figures compiled by the Agricultural Engineers Association output for the five months to the end of May this year was 32,250, down 18.9 per cent on the more than 44,900 made in the same period of 1983.

Case International was formed after JI Case took over International Harvester's farm equipment operations last year. It secured 450 redundancies at Meltham earlier this year and 100 at its Leigh components factory near Manchester.

Ford has introduced some "down days"—temporary layoffs—at its Basildon tractor plant. Last year—a particularly good year for Ford—Basildon actually recruited more workers.

Massey, which produces about 45 per cent of UK-made trac-

Art royalties from abroad top £100m

By George Graham

ARTISTS' ROYALTIES from overseas topped £100m for the first time in 1984, according to Trade and Industry Department figures published yesterday. However, royalty payments to foreign countries on books, recordings and performance rights have also grown strongly, so the balance of receipts over payments still well below previous peaks.

Net artistic royalty receipts, which contribute to the UK's surplus in invisible trade, amounted to £20.1m in 1984, a 35 per cent rise on the previous year but still 37 per cent below the peak of £28m recorded in 1979.

Britain receives 38 per cent of its artists' royalty payments from the EEC and 29 per cent from North America. Developing countries account for less than 4 per cent of royalty receipts, the department's figures show.

Nearly half of all artistic royalty payments to overseas countries goes to the countries of Western Europe; 45 per cent goes to North America. Less than 24 per cent of these royalties are paid to developing countries.

NUM branches to press for wider overtime ban

BY DAVID BRINDLE, LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

PRESSURE is mounting in the National Union of Mineworkers for a widening of the overtime ban begun two weeks ago in South Wales. The ban is in protest at the delay in agreeing a pay rise for 1985.

Two NUM branches in the Doncaster area are to press the next meeting of the union's Yorkshire area council to follow the example set by South Wales in attempting to bring British Coal to the bargaining table.

In Durham, meanwhile, the NUM coalfield conference will today consider calls for an overtime ban over both the pay issue and the threatened closure of Seabank Colliery.

Five Durham pits have already been shut since the end of the 1984-85 miners' strike.

British Coal has refused to pay NUM members the £5.50-a-week wage rise awarded to the breakaway Union of Democratic Mineworkers because of a continuing argument over pension contributions for the period of the strike.

The South Wales overtime ban cost the coalfield just less than 4 per cent of its normal output in the first week, according to official estimates.

The NUM puts the loss to British Coal at £250,000 a week. The move to spread the action to Yorkshire comes from two of the most militant pits, Hatfield Main and Arminthorpe, which employ between 1,000 and 1,500 men each and which remained largely in support of the year-long strike.

Mr Dave Douglas, NUM dele-

British companies 'tune in' to American markets

BY LISA WOOD

NORTH America is no longer a graveyard for UK retailers, according to a report by Hoare Govett, the London-based stock-broking firm.

Companies such as Laura Ashley, Marks and Spencer and Sir Terence Conran's Storehouse group are now much more attuned to the demands of the North American consumer, said Hoare Govett. "In addition," it said, "the American market is itself more receptive to European designs and fashion."

Hoare Govett said UK head offices were now more ready to let their North American subsidiaries run themselves as American operations rather than clones of the UK chain.

"Most pertinently, it involves a willingness to give greater autonomy to American manage-

Borrie advises caution for time-share buyers

BY DAVID CHURCHILL, CONSUMER AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

A WARNING to consumers to act carefully when considering buying timeshare holiday accommodation was given yesterday by Sir Gordon Borrie, Director General of Fair Trading.

Sir Gordon's guidance follows recent publicity about possibly unethical practices by some time-share operators.

"Time-sharing seems to be a boom sector at present and, as with all such booms, it has attracted a mixture of sellers—perfectly reputable organisations, and others whose selling methods have attracted considerable criticism," he said.

Time-sharing is where the consumer buys a limited period of time—say one or two weeks—each year in holiday accommodation.

The structure of the industry makes it difficult for the Office

Strathclyde to seek EEC fund

SCOTLAND'S LARGEST employer, Strathclyde regional council, is to apply to the European Social Fund for a grant of £3.7m to provide 9,000 jobs and training places next year. The region will match the EEC contribution if the applications are successful, providing £3.7m towards 14 schemes throughout Strathclyde.

Councillor Charles Gray, leader of the council, said: "We are going for a very major package next year which, assuming we are successful, will make a substantial impact on the regional economy."

Watchdog raps 'police attack on miners'

BY OUR LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

THE INDEPENDENT Police Complaints Authority yesterday expressed concern that it had not been able to bring disciplinary action against police officers who assaulted miners during the 1984 strike.

The authority said that some officers had assaulted those who had been peaceful and uninvolved in an incident at Stainforth, South Yorkshire. But none had been identified to enable charges to be brought.

One reason for the lack of identification was that officers had removed their numbers from their uniforms. Uniforms were later re-designed to make this impossible.

The authority's report has

been delayed by court cases and appeal issues arising from the incident. It deals with a "very violent" day in Stainforth, the pit village for the Hatfield Main Colliery, in August 1984 when the miners' strike was at its height.

A total of 270 officers from six police forces were involved in controlling events surrounding the return to work of two miners. In two disturbances, seven hours apart, ten people were arrested of whom nine were later convicted. Fifty complaints against the police were lodged.

The authority, which took 146 civilian witness statements, says many of the witnesses agreed

Hazel Duffy explains that pressure-related illness is not confined to executives Stress gives all workers something to worry about

BY MID-AUGUST most self-respecting executives should be sunning themselves on Cornish beaches or braving the elements in Scotland with their families.

The exceptions are those who will not—or cannot—take the advice given recently by the Institute of Directors that all work and no play does not produce an executive who is respected by his colleagues.

Wealthy, perhaps even wise. But certainly not healthy. That was the message of the institute's little sermon.

It is difficult to pinpoint the executives who regularly work 15 hours a day, seven days a week, and take no holidays. And even harder to say with certainty what trouble they are storing up for themselves.

There is no statistical evidence of executives' working hours. Outside the watchful gaze of trade union health and safety officers, their long and dedicated hours go unrecorded except by those who work with them.

But they are not often unworried. Many of those who work hard are managers, and frequently owners, of smallish businesses employing less than 50 people. Their rewards depend largely on their own efforts. That is also true for partners in professional firms, who divide the profits after the staff have been paid.

Dr William Dixon, medical director of British United Provident Association services, said that in the 20 years he



Stress at work: nurses and driving instructors are as much at risk as executives

has been examining patients, he has not been aware of any marked change in the number of hours worked by executives. He does, however, have people coming to him who work very long hours.

"I don't think it is a problem as long as they recognise what they are doing and they have a stable home situation," he said. "Frequently, if they are running their own business, they are doing and share in the rewards that come from success."

The problem comes with those who are less senior. They and their families are not motivated in the same way. Wives start putting pressure on absent husbands who feel they have to match the hours that

their boss puts in. "There can be a lot of inverted pride in staying as long at the office as the boss."

A lot is said and written about stress but experts are wary of saying that any particular situation causes stress. "It is a very woolly area. One person's stimulation is another person's stress," said Dr Tim Carter, director of medical services of the Health and Safety Executive.

The HSE funds studies into stress by the Department of Psychology at Oxford University, which has carried out physiological tests on nurses to see how they adapt at various stages of their training to high-pressure demands; on driving instructors, a "stressful" occu-

pation; and on student teachers, in training and facing their first class.

Dr Carter emphasised that these have to be conducted under strictly controlled conditions if other factors—for example, interrupted sleep—are not to intrude on the measurement of stress induced by work conditions.

The evidence available suggests stress is greatest for workers who have rigid demands on them but have very little control over the pattern of their work—skilled manual workers, first line supervisors, for example, rather than professional and managerial people.

Heart attacks are also more likely to strike down people

in lower social groups, perhaps giving the lie to the perception that hard-working executives are more prone to this affliction.

In spite of the difficulties of defining stress, experts agree that certain aspects of the executive/manager's working life can create pressures on family life and ultimately on the executive or manager.

This is particularly true when, as in increasingly required, long periods are spent abroad, away from the family. As the Institute of Directors warned, a working day without breaks can be stressful.

The length of the desirable break, and the diversion pursued during it, depends on the person. A game of squash for some, a good meal for others will restore them to peak working condition. There is, however, no universal prescription.

Not can there be any hard and fast rules about who can safely work long hours.

Dr Carter said: "Recognise when you are getting to the end of your tether, getting irritable with others, making silly mistakes. If you are working with others, watch out for the same signs in them."

Dr Dixon cautioned that long hours should not be worked for too long at a stretch. "When you are really interested in what they are doing, they can work very hard for limited periods, say six to 12 months. But they cannot normally cope for longer periods."

Hospital staff vote to accept 6% increase

By Our Labour Staff

ABOUT 90,000 hospital ancillary staff members of the Confederation of Health Service Employees have voted by a 9-1 majority to accept a pay deal worth 6 per cent.

The vote, conducted at branch meetings, indicates that the deal will easily be approved by most of the 250,000 workers involved, in spite of the recommendation by one union, the general union GMBU, to reject it.

The deal includes grade restructuring which would give the lowest-paid a total of 10.1 per cent over two years.

The 6 per cent figure for 1986 means ancillary staff would match the going rate in the economy as a whole for the first time for several years.

For Colin O'Kane, Cobse national officer and chairman of the negotiating team, said yesterday: "Our members have indicated that although this deal falls short of our claim, it is a step in the right direction."

"It creates a sound basis for future negotiations and for the eradication of low pay."

The offer would produce weekly basic pay rates ranging from £77.13 to £101.75 for 40 hours.

Mr O'Kane said the unions were disappointed that employers had failed to reduce the working week, which was one of the few remaining examples of a 40-hour-week for manual workers.

Liverpool dock workers offered two-year deal

By Our Labour Staff

LIVERPOOL DOCKERS have been offered a two-year pay and productivity deal worth 4 per cent a year.

The package would give dockers a 28 week increase on average earnings of £199. The Transport and General Workers' Union, which represents the Mersey's 1,800 registered dockers, lodged a claim for 12.5 per cent when negotiations began in May. Union leaders will meet on Monday to discuss the offer.

To ensure that increases in port charges are kept in line with inflation, the employers have also asked for changed working practices to cut costs.

The port, which made a profit of £2m last year, can only provide work for 1,600 dockers. Those who are not allocated work at the start of the day are given fall-back pay to remain at home waiting for work. Fall-back pay cost the port £2.5m last year.

The proposed pay package will have to be ratified by a mass meeting.

Littlewoods raises YTS pay

YOUTH Training Scheme workers in their second year at Littlewoods, the mail order company, will have their pay almost doubled under an agreement the company has negotiated with Uswd, the shopworkers' union.

The deal will give trainees in the company's five sites £89 a week instead of the £35 minimum laid down by the Manpower Services Commission, the union said yesterday.

Littlewoods will pay first-year trainees £2.50 above the minimum allowance of £87.30

Austin Rover shopfloor employees seek £10 rise

BY CHARLES LEADBEATER, LABOUR STAFF

TRADE UNION leaders of the Austin Rover 23,000 shopfloor workers yesterday presented the management with a claim for an increase of £10 a week on basic pay—between 6.7 per cent and 8.7 per cent.

They have also asked for improved overtime rates. The entire claim would add 3 per cent (£36.2m) to ARG's employment bill, the unions say.

The unions have also asked that shopfloor workers' terms and conditions of employment be brought in line with those of white collar staff. This would involve higher sick pay, and fringe benefits.

The unions say equal treatment of white and blue collar workers is essential if the company wants to pursue "Japanese style industrial relations."

They also want the working

week to be reduced by one hour to 38 hours and for shopfloor workers to be given extra holidays outside the normal holiday periods when the main plants at Longbridge and Cowley shut down.

The unions also propose setting up a joint working party to draw up a new bonus scheme. Most shopfloor workers are earning their full bonus of between £27 and £30 a week, which makes up 16 per cent of weekly pay.

The unions would like part of these bonus payments to be consolidated into basic pay.

The working party would also plan a new pay grading structure to take account of the way new technology has changed job descriptions and responsibilities.

Austin Rover is not expected to respond to the unions' claim until early next month.

Teaching unions agree to talks on interim package

BY OUR LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

THE TEACHING unions and education authority employers in England and Wales agreed yesterday to negotiate an interim deal on teachers' responsibility to cover for absent colleagues.

The two sides undertook to meet on September 1 to agree on a deal for the autumn school term only. During the term, talks would take place on a permanent agreement on salary structure and employment contracts.

However, there was some doubt last night over how strong a commitment the unions had made. The employers believed they had won a firm assurance from the unions that a deal would be struck, come what may, on September 1.

The unions were less clear.

Mr Doug McAvoy, deputy general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "The teachers' organisations indicated a willingness to negotiate an interim understanding on cover."

The cover issue has become of crucial importance to the structure and contract talks, in which an outline agreement was reached last month. Not only has the teachers' refusal to cover been a highly effective sanction—and one that has continued since the year-long teachers' dispute—but the whole package now stands or falls on ensuring cover for the autumn term.

If no agreement is reached on September 1, the employers will not proceed with the pay package.

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Mr D. P. Trezies has been appointed deputy chairman and managing director and Mr M. F.

ECONOMIC DIARY

TOMORROW: Department for National Savings issues monthly report (July). Soviet and Israeli diplomats begin talks in Helsinki on resuming consular relations.

MONDAY: The Treasury publishes public sector borrowing report (July). Soviet and Israeli diplomats begin talks in Helsinki on resuming consular relations.

TUESDAY: CBI/FT publish survey of distributive trades (end July). European disarmament conference starts its 12th and final session in Stockholm (to September 19). Australian budget. Racial Electronics annual meeting.

WEDNESDAY: Central Statistical Office issues figures for the gross domestic product (output-based) (second quarter-preliminary). New construction orders figures for June given by the Department of the Environment.

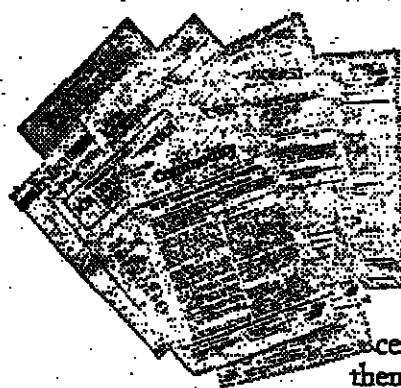
THURSDAY: Central Statistical Office announces the cyclical indicators for the UK economy (July). Department of Trade and Industry issues figures for capital expenditure by the manufacturing and service industries (second quarter-provisional) and manufacturers' and distributors' stocks (second quarter-provisional). US budget statement (July), consumer price index, real earnings.

FRIDAY: UK balance of payments 1984 (October) (CSO Pink Book). Statistics from the Department of Trade and Industry on sales and orders of the engineering industries (May) and finished steel consumption and stock changes (second quarter-provisional).

BASE LENDING RATES

| Bank | % | Bank | % |
|-------------------------|----|------------------------------|----|
| ARN Bank | 10 | Exeter Trust Ltd. | 10 |
| Allied Arab Bank Ltd. | 10 | Financial & Gen. Sec. | 10 |
| Allied Bank & Co. | 10 | First Nat. Fin. Corp. | 11 |
| Allied Irish Bank | 10 | First Nat. Sec. Ltd. | 11 |
| American Express Bk. | 10 | Robert Fraser & Co. | 11 |
| Amro Bank | 10 | Robert Fraser & Ptns. | 11 |
| Bank of America | 10 | Grindlays Bank | 10 |
| Bank of Australia | 10 | Guinness Mahon | 10 |
| Bank of Canada | 10 | Hambros Bank | 10 |
| Bank of China | 10 | Heritable & Gen. Trust | 10 |
| Bank of India | 10 | Hill Samuel | 10 |
| Bank of Japan | 10 | C. Hoare & Co. | 10 |
| Bank of Korea | 10 | Hongkong & Shanghai | 10 |
| Bank of London | 10 | Knowles & Co. Ltd. | 10 |
| Bank of Mexico | 10 | Lloyds Bank | 10 |
| Bank of New Zealand | 10 | Mase Westpac Ltd. | 10 |
| Bank of Norway | 10 | Meghna & Sons Ltd. | 10 |
| Bank of Persia | 10 | Midland Bank | 10 |
| Bank of Portugal | 10 | Mount Credit Corp. Ltd. | 10 |
| Bank of Rangoon | 10 | National Bk. of Kuwait | 10 |
| Bank of Scotland | 10 | National Bk. of Oman | 10 |
| Bank of Spain | 10 | National Bk. of Qatar | 10 |
| Bank of Sweden | 10 | National Bk. of Saudi Arabia | 10 |
| Bank of Switzerland | 10 | National Bk. of Singapore | 10 |
| Bank of the East | 10 | Northern Bank Ltd. | 10 |
| Bank of the Middle East | 10 | Norwich Gen. Trust | 10 |
| Bank of the Pacific | 10 | PK Finance Int'l (UK) | 10 |
| Bank of the South | 10 | Provincial Trust Ltd. | 10 |
| Bank of the West | 10 | R. Raphael & Sons | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | Roxburgh Guarantees | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | Royal Bank of Canada | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | Royal Trust Co. Canada | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | Standard Chartered | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | Trustee Savings Bank | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | UDT Mortgage Express | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | United Bank of Kuwait | 10 |
| Bank of the World | 10 | United Bank of Oman | 10 |
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| Bank of the World | 10 | Westway Leasing | 10 |
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by Alan Kelly, Partner, Grant Thornton

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Saturday August 16 1988

Learning to love inflation

NOT SO long ago, in the days when people used to lose sleep about inflation, there was a furious argument between two main schools of thought. The corporate-staters, embracing the mainstream Labour party and the consensus Tories, used to worry about cost push and believed in incomes policy. The right (and oddly enough, the regimes behind the Iron Curtain) thought that money lost its value if you created too much of it and that inflation was best fought by raising interest rates — or, in Communist countries, by making borrowing very difficult. All schools agreed that a depreciating exchange rate was inflationary and all agreed that inflation was a Bad Thing.

Intractable problem

Things seem to be very different now. In the UK wages are rising far faster than prices. Ministers deplore this, but not because it is inflationary: they say it causes unemployment. The money supply is growing far faster than is officially approved, mainly because of an apparently insatiable appetite for borrowing on the part of ordinary citizens; yet ministers have nothing to say, and the only public warnings come from one or two bankers and building society chairmen who fear that some of this borrowing will never be repaid. The exchange rate has been weak, yet even the gilt market is quite buoyant.

In the US, the picture is also striking. Wage costs there are well controlled but the currency has fallen sensationally, and domestic inflation has actually risen. The inflation target is set at 4 per cent, yet the yield on 30-year Federal bonds has only wobbled since the spring.

A naive observer, remembering the terror which the very mention of inflation used to arouse quite recently, might conclude that the markets have examined the inflation forecast and decided they do not believe them. The truth is quite different: the markets do believe the inflation forecasts but are not unduly worried by them. While everyone would prefer stable prices, as enjoyed in West Germany and Japan, to rising prices, recent experience has suggested that there may be a still more intractable problem to worry about: falling prices.

It is more than 50 years since disinflation last posed any nightmares (and President Roosevelt called for champagne when he heard the news of the first rise in US farm prices). That is perhaps why the markets took some time to learn that falling prices are not unalloyed. In fact, falling prices are a boon for commodity producers, and shocks in many property markets, have achieved a quick re-education.

As a result, the markets have

been relieved at the tentative stabilisation of oil prices, and the weakness of other commodity prices remains a source of worry, in spite of the fact that it improves the purchasing power of the developed world. Oil prices are still, indeed, too low for financial comfort, and a recovery in US farm prices would again be likely to do wonders for champagne sales.

The fact is that the dangers of credit collapse have been quite near enough to persuade markets to welcome and expect the expansive credit and money policies now being pursued in all the main money centres, to bring down the cost of debt service and, indeed, to stabilise basic prices after their heavy fall. All the current argument is about whether or not to relax policies still further.

The markets are right to see more danger in falling than in rising prices. Falling prices involve high real interest rates (since nominal rates cannot turn negative) and tend to lead to every kind of expenditure being postponed. That is why money balances build up while prices are falling: although monetary policies have been relaxed all over the world they are still not relaxed enough to meet the full potential demand, so that interest rates are well above their values in past deflations. Too much postponement of consumer spending (because prices are expected to be lower later) and investment spending (because demand is weak) can lead to economic and financial collapse.

Heady recovery

All the same, it seems strange that there is so little apparent worry about the possibility that inflation, which will almost certainly rise again in the English-speaking world, may not again get out of hand, as it did in the 1970s.

So far as the US is concerned, this lack of worry seems well justified. Once the lower value of the dollar internationally is fully reflected in domestic prices, things will probably stabilise again. There is virtually no sign of any acceleration of domestic costs.

For the UK, crossed fingers are required. The case for hoping that inflation will return to a modest trend level, rather than taking off, rests on two hopes: that credit demand will choke itself off as the burden of personal debt reaches a very high plateau; and that employers will begin to reduce the going rate at which they concede wage demands, once the heady recovery in profits they have been enjoying exhausts itself — probably next year. Present gilt yields seem to forecast about 5 per cent to 6 per cent inflation at worst; but nerves may get a little strained later this year.

The Democratic Party is in its "worst shape since the immediate aftermath of the Civil War," Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York.

"In the eyes of the public, the Democrats have come to represent the status quo, while Republicans have come to represent change and reform," Boston pollster Brad Bannon.

The Republicans "have been able to paint Democrats as being soft on defending our country's essential character and our essential value system and our essential freedoms," Former Governor Charles Robb of Virginia.

MORE THAN five-and-a-half years since President Ronald Reagan swept into the White House, many US Democrats have still not quite recovered from the shock. With crucial Congressional elections now less than three months away, the Democratic Party is far from completing an agonising process of navel-gazing, from which it is hoped, new policies and new leaders will ultimately emerge. The immediate task is to regain control of the Senate, which the Democrats lost for the first time in a quarter of a century in the Reagan 1980 landslide. In the coming November 4 mid-term elections, 34 of the 100 Senate seats are up for grabs, and with almost twice as many Republicans as Democrats facing re-election, the party is hopeful of winning the magic four extra seats that would restore what it regards as its rightful suzerainty on Capitol Hill.

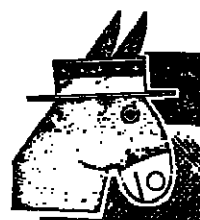
The Senate races, however, are more likely to be decided by local issues and personalities than the sort of national and international policies that the Democrats are now wrestling with. The same goes for the House of Representatives, with all 435 members up for re-election, in which the Democrats hope to increase their dominance by adding ten or 15 seats to their present 251. But the soul-searing that is still going on in the Democratic Party has a slightly longer time scale. The real objective is to win the White House in November 1988, when the Democrats should have an easier opponent than Mr Reagan, with whom they have so signally failed to get to grips in the last five years.

The Democrats' fundamental problem is well known. With the expanding conservatively inclined populations of the South and West, and the decline of smokestack industry and trade unions in the Democrats' traditional north-eastern and mid-western strongholds, the party can no longer rely on its traditional New Deal coalition of blue collar workers, women, minorities, intellectuals and liberals to carry the country.

Mr Reagan's 49-state trouncing of Mr Walter Mondale in 1984 drove home that lesson for those who still needed to learn it — not least because Mr Mondale, by ostentatiously ingratiating himself with each component of the old coalition managed to portray the Democrats as the party of narrow special interests, not one of national vision.

Now the debate is over how to reach out beyond that coalition while still retaining its support. A few Democrats would argue that the party should stick to its liberal traditions, and perhaps even move to the fashionable left in the hope that the political wheel will come full circle in due course.

But the majority view is that the party should move to the



The starters for '88



The missing leader

By Reginald Dale, US Editor, in Washington

centre — particularly if it is to win the conservative south, which is widely seen as the key to victory in 1988. The challenge is to develop new policies that are slightly more conservative but still distinguishable from the Republicans', and it is not easy.

As Senator Gary Hart of Colorado correctly pointed out in his almost-successful challenge to Mr Mondale for the 1984 nomination, the party is ripe for "generational change."

The older generation of leaders is on the way out. Mr Tip O'Neill, the elderly Speaker of the House of Representatives, is retiring as unofficial leader of the Opposition — a role he never wanted — without ever having managed to inflict serious political damage on Mr Reagan. The down of the liberals, Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, has already taken himself out of the 1988 race and will probably never run for President again. The decent but ineffectual Mr Walter Mondale, crushed by Mr Reagan in 1984, is out of politics for good.

This leaves a vacuum which is exerting a strong pull on a wide range of candidates for the succession, many of whom are in their 40s, but none of whom as yet display ideal leadership qualities. Nobody has yet officially declared himself (there are no women among them), but these are the names that are currently being tossed around the political arena.

● Senator Gary Hart (48). Close second to Mr Mondale in the 1984 Democratic presidential primaries, he is now the early front-runner for 1988.

Wounded by Mr Mondale's "Where's the beef?" crack in 1984, he is hard at work developing his so-called "new ideas" into an issue-oriented campaign that includes calls for radical reform of the defence establishment and a new US foreign policy acknowledging that the world is no longer subject to "bipolar" dominance by the superpowers.

An outsider from the traditional party power centres, he concedes that he tends towards the plodding rather than the charismatic. Critics say he is too dry and introspective, and many party regulars still resent his damaging challenge to Mr Mondale.

● Governor Mario Cuomo of New York (54). A rising party "star" since his much-praised keynote speech at the 1984 Democratic convention in San Francisco, and a highly popular Governor of New York, he is likely to be easily re-elected Governor later this year. A good radio and TV performer, known for determination and hard work, he draws an emotional public response to his image as an immigrant boy made good and a defender of family values. Though seen as a liberal, he denies being one.

His disadvantages are his public persona as a quintessential New York-oriented ethnic politician (highly sensitive to the misdeeds of his Italian ancestry), with little appeal in the South and West. Believed to be weak on defence and foreign policy, he has also been criticised for failing to achieve much of his programme in New York, concentrating on talk rather than action.

● The Rev Jesse Jackson (44). The only other losing candidate in 1984 who is expected to run again in 1988 — possibly as an independent if his "rainbow coalition" of blacks, Hispanics, poor farmers, trade unionists, anti-nuclear activists, environmentalists and assorted left-wingers splits from a party that is moving rightwards. A fine speaker and TV performer, he comes across as a mixture of politician, preacher and prophet, but without clearly thought out policies.

He will never be President, but aspires to be the leader of the Democratic Left and a symbol of black pride. Despite his attempts to widen his base, his support is overwhelmingly black. But he could do well in the 1988 primaries if he runs as a Democrat and could damage the Democrats badly if he runs as an independent.

● Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware (43). Tipped as a "dark horse," he can light up a room with his charm, wit and oratorical flourishes, but does not know when to stop and can be tactless. More liberal than conservative, he embraces the idealism of the 1960s and the traditions of the Kennedy Brothers and Martin Luther King.

He is a traditional, hand-shaking, Irish-American politician, who believes that the Democrats have disastrously ignored the middle classes. He is not yet accepted as a heavyweight in the Senate.

● Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey (43). A Hall of Fame basketball player, best known in the Senate as the driving force behind tax reform over

the past five years. A Rhodes scholar at Oxford, described by friends as "thorough, thoughtful and innovative," he is also an advocate of international monetary reform and an energy expert.

Sometimes regarded as a "loner," he is more dogged and deliberate than charismatic, and not a scintillating speaker. But he has quickly established a leadership role in the Senate and the party as an energetic and pragmatic liberal in favour of a strong defence.

● Representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri (45). A St Louis lawyer in his tenth year in the House, he is already running hard for 1988, particularly in Iowa, home of the first party caucuses.

A tireless workhorse, and a moderate, he appeals to voters with his tall, handsome, sandy-haired looks and boyish features. But he is largely unknown nationwide, and no member of the House has been elected President since 1880.

● Former Governor Charles (Chuck) Robb (47). Once best known as the Marine captain who married Lynda Bird Johnson, LBJ's daughter, he has just concluded a highly successful four-year term as Governor of Virginia, where he is widely credited with reversing the Democrats' declining political fortunes.

Polished and popular in Virginia, he is one of the leading lights of the new Democratic Leadership Council, formed to lead the party in a new centrist direction that will appeal to the South and West. A fiscal conservative, he is liberal on social causes, edu-

cation and the advancement of minorities, but closer to the Republicans on defence and foreign policy. A man to watch

● Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia (47). An erstwhile crony of former President Jimmy Carter, he is considered the Democrats' leading defence expert and one of the most influential politicians on Capitol Hill. He considers himself right of centre.

Painstaking and unobtrusive, he does not command a striking presence of powerful oratory, and is somewhat distant from the party's mainstream. He is seen as a more likely vice-presidential than presidential candidate.

● Governor Bruce Babbitt of Arizona (48). A successful state politician, who loves the gritty of governing, he has won admiration rather than affection in Arizona.

Regarded as thoughtful, intellectual and rather cold, he is a precise, not a dramatic, speaker. Another "loner," he is unpopular with well-organised labour and definitely only a long shot.

● Lee Iacocca (61), chairman of Chrysler. The wild card in the Democratic pack, he insists that he does not want to be considered a candidate — though not strongly enough to put off his supporters, who want to "draft" him whether he likes it or not.

Probably America's best-known businessman, he runs close to Mr Reagan in opinion polls as a leadership figure of whom the country generally approves, and is constantly in the news. Past precedents, however, suggest that a man with no political experience would have little more than an outside chance.

Of these, Messrs Robb, Nunn, Babbitt, Gephardt and Biden are all members of the Democratic Leadership Council, and thus busy exploring the new centrist policy ideas, some of them drawn from the Hart campaign of 1984. Many political experts, however, believe that only when the new leaders have emerged with the policies finally take shape and be tested.

Some of the centrist's more intriguing ideas concern the economy, where they are trying to establish a new concept of "competitiveness." They argue, for example, that wages and salaries, even executive pensions, should be tied to a company's performance. Management should pay less attention to short-term profits and be ready to adapt to competition without government help. Most Democrats agree on the need for a tax increase to reduce budget deficits.

The party is more at sea over foreign policy, where it has still not found a way out of the negative attitudes, sometimes verging on isolationism, that have dogged it since Vietnam, and on international trade.

While sensing that "fair trade" could be a major vote-winning issue, many Democrats are still wary of being labelled the party of protectionism. Above all, the party has not found an agreed answer to the central question of the role of government in post-New Deal American society. While the liberals want to stick to the old philosophy of a caring, interventionist government, the centrists are tempted by Reaganite policies of government retrenchment and deregulation. On this, as on most other issues, as Mr Moynihan puts it, the party is "gravely short of new ideas" — just as it is of charismatic leaders.

Man in the News

Karl Otto Pöhl

Lightness of touch deceives the eye

By Jonathan Carr



FOR a man caught this week between an almost irresistible force and a nearly immovable object, Karl Otto Pöhl looks remarkably buoyant.

Maybe that is just experience. As West German Bundesbank President for the last six years and as holder of top economic and monetary posts for a decade before that, Pöhl has been in many similar squeezes before — and always managed to escape being crushed.

The almost irresistible force arrived last weekend in the person of Paul Volcker, chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board, trailing his substantial cloud of cigar smoke and chanting a by-now familiar theme. America's partners must take new action (such as cutting interest rates) to boost economic growth, raise imports and thus help stem the huge US trade deficit. When the Fed cut its discount rate to 6 per cent last month, it was noted that neither the Germans nor the Japanese followed suit.

Small wonder if Pöhl was unable to resist an ironic smile. He can recall the western economic summit conference in London nine years ago, when US President Jimmy Carter made a similar appeal to Germany and Japan to take on a "locomotive" role. Pöhl, as Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's "shepherd" for the summit, was responsible for boxing through in the final communiqué a now-famous phrase — "inflation is not a cure for unemployment; on the contrary it is one of its basic causes."

A year later, none the less, the Germans did try to act as a modest economic locomotive. The result was higher inflation and public borrowing, an experience few in Germany are inclined to repeat.

On the other hand Pöhl, aged 56, knows Volcker well, sees his dilemma and certainly does not blame him for the budget middle and growth dilemma in the US. Now the world's two senior central bankers, Pöhl and Volcker have known one another — in different senior functions — for around 15 years. In that time Volcker has seen economic policy cartwheels under Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan — Pöhl under

Chancellors Brandt, Schmidt and Kohl. The two are brothers in adversity.

Pöhl is disposed to help Volcker if he can. He certainly sees the danger of a further sharp fall in the dollar (squeezing German exports) and of growing protectionist pressure in the Congress if the Germans — and their partners — do nothing.

But he faces the nearly immovable object of the central bank council, the Bundesbank's policy-making body which held its first meeting after the summer recess on Thursday. Like governments in Bonn, the council is a highly complex coalition.

From the outside it is easy to ask impatiently "why doesn't the Bundesbank just withdraw

realising that a decision has to be priced out of a highly diverse group, most of whose members have little international experience and many of whom at present have strong domestic arguments for resisting US demands.

The council cannot be dominated but it can have a consensus drawn out of it by bit-and-in this Pöhl is quite a virtuoso.

Pöhl learned a lot of lessons, positive and negative, from his predecessor as President Oskar Emminger whose funeral was held in Frankfurt this week.

He admired Emminger's razor-sharp mind and long experience in international currency matters. But as vice-president from 1977 to end-

that Emminger did not always show the lightest of touches in his handling of the central bank council.

Pöhl does not make that mistake, and while the council held a thorough policy review on Thursday it took no action. It will be surprising, though, if that pressure between force and object does not result in a few weeks in a German interest rate cut, in co-ordination with other countries if that can be arranged.

Two criticisms of Pöhl can quite often be heard. One is that, as West Germany's most experienced top official by far in his field, he could adopt a higher profile with proposals for European and world monetary reform.

question of Bundesbank consensus already mentioned. Pöhl can go out on a limb now and again — but not far. Another part is that Pöhl tends to hold back exactly because of his experience — he has seen lots of grand designs shattered and dreams dissipated.

He admits the European Monetary System (EMS) works better than he initially expected, but still feels too much is said about monetary integration and too little about economic integration. He would like to see budgets better balanced before talking about currency target zones. As for the ECU — well it has had a certain success but "you can't turn vin ordinaire into Chateau Lafite by changing the label on the bottle."

The other criticism of Pöhl, still to be heard from some German banking circles, is that he tends to be too light — even flippant. He can deliver an amusing off-the-cuff speech and have an audience eating out of his hand. That hardly makes him popular with those who toil for hours over their texts, only to evoke ritual tribute from bored hearers.

Besides, Pöhl's almost off-hand approach should not deceive. There is good reason to think that behind it there is a man with strong ambition and vulnerable temperament, who has been hurt more than once on the road to the top. It is no secret, for example, that Helmut Schmidt would have preferred someone else as Bundesbank President and only named Pöhl after a painful delay.

No one can fairly deny that Pöhl has been a good President, combining a solid economic background with political "feel" and a talent for improvisation. No doubt it is not enough for Pöhl to be a good President but rather to be the best the Bundesbank has had. He still has time to prove that. His initial eight-year term expires at the end of next year — but he could surely have another.

There are occasional rumours in Bonn of plots to replace him — but any rivals must know they are dealing with a highly accomplished professional, both as political operator and central



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ICI paints the globe



1

Oklahoma bank rescued by FDIC

BY TERRY DODSWORTH IN NEW YORK

THE GOVERNMENT-backed US Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) came to the rescue of one of Oklahoma's largest banking groups yesterday in an unusual agreement aimed at shoring-up the bank in return for significant sacrifices by shareholders.

The bailout of BancOklahoma, the second largest bank in the state with assets of \$2.7bn, comes almost a month to the day after the collapse of First National Bank and Trust Company of Oklahoma City. First National was rescued by

the Los Angeles-based First Interstate Bank in a move which marked the second biggest US bank failure in US history.

The FDIC's action, while similar to its bailout of Chicago-based Continental Illinois two years ago, is a striking departure from its usual rescue procedures, which are normally triggered only when a bank has closed.

Under the rescue package, the FDIC is injecting \$130m into BancOklahoma in the form of \$90m in cash and \$40m in assumed debt to keep it operating as a going concern. But in return for this assistance the

FDIC will receive warrants to buy 55 per cent of the common stock of BancOklahoma "at a nominal price."

"The warrants represent the contribution of existing shareholders to the assistance programme," the FDIC said. Another condition of the package is that the group's Bank of Oklahoma unit in Oklahoma City, where losses in the real estate sector in particular have caused the main problems for the group, will be merged with the profitable bank of Oklahoma in Tulsa.

The FDIC's move has been seen in the US as a possible precedent-setting procedure as the Government agency faces up to widespread financial problems in the banking sector in the oil-producing parts of the country.

BancOklahoma said yesterday that following the merger and the reorganisation, it would have a primary capital-to-assets ratio of 12.66 per cent, more than twice the minimum regulatory guideline.

It added that other banks that had lent term debt to the company to finance acquisitions in 1983 and 1984 had agreed to convert a third of the \$73m lending into primary capital.

ABN ahead and makes \$200m cash call

By Laura Rawn in Amsterdam

MODESTLY higher profits and a rights issue to raise around \$150m (\$215m) were announced yesterday by Abn-Amro Bank, Nederland (ABN), the biggest of the Dutch commercial banks.

Profits for the first half of 1986 improved by 8 per cent to \$124m after tax, which is a significantly slower performance than the interim profit gains of 28 per cent recently reported by rival bank, Amro.

ABN's rights issue is to be a one-for-ten at a price to be set. The shares were changing hands yesterday at \$1.62.

The plunging dollar kept the profit rise to a modest single-digit figure and prompted a cautious note for all of 1986 because of ABN's extensive operations abroad.

The bank said the dollar exchange rate and ABN's worldwide securities business were the main factors in its earnings, which it expects to match 1985.

It was mainly commission income from securities trading that lifted total income by 3.5 per cent to \$1.27bn in the six months. Interest income fell 3 per cent as narrower margins between lending and borrowing were only partially offset by greater lending volume.

Provisions were \$130m for the period, the same amount as for the first six months of 1985. ABN said it was too early to predict full-year provisions, which were \$160m last year.

The rights issue proceeds will be used to finance expected expansion abroad, especially in the US, and to strengthen capital ratios.

Nederlandsche Middenstandsbank, the third largest Dutch commercial bank, will report its first-half results next Tuesday.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES Dollar steady but nervous

£ IN NEW YORK

| Aug 15 | Latest | Prev. close |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Spot | \$1.4952-1.4953 | \$1.4955-1.4956 |
| 1 month | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 |
| 3 months | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28-1.29 |
| 12 months | 4.55-4.56 | 4.55-4.56 |

Forward premiums and discounts apply to the US dollar

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per cent. In addition there was some optimism derived from the growing possibility of a cut in US West German and Japanese interest rates, so widening differentials and increasing sterling's attraction. There was a considerable body of opinion that a cut in rates elsewhere would not necessarily lead to an automatic cut in UK clearing bank base rates.

The pound finished at \$1.4945 from \$1.4935 and \$1.4925 compared with DM 3.08. Against the yen it rose to ¥230.25 from ¥229.50 and ¥229.00 compared with ¥228.50. On the pound's exchange rate index closed at 110.6 from 110.5. The Danish krone was weaker against the dollar but improved in terms of the D-mark, following an announcement that the Danish budget deficit would be reduced. The D-mark eased to DM 3.75 from DM 3.76. Sterling was generally firmer, helped by a rise in oil prices and an encouraging fall in UK inflation to an annual rate of 2.4

Falconbridge to sell South African stake

By Jim Jones in Johannesburg

FALCONBRIDGE, the Canadian mining group, is seeking to divest its 25 per cent interest in Western Platinum, the smallest of the country's three platinum producers.

Lonrho, the UK multinational which owns 50.4 per cent of Western, has first option on Falconbridge's shares. The rest of Western's equity is owned by Mobil of the US through its subsidiary, Superior Oil.

Mr Christopher Besty, Falconbridge's chief executive for South Africa, would not comment on reports from Toronto of the planned sale. He left Johannesburg yesterday for discussions abroad.

Western is the only South African platinum mine to disclose production figures. Last year it produced 264,340 oz of platinum group metals (PGM), which included 140,402 oz of platinum and 64,627 oz of palladium. At present the company's output is about one tenth of that of Rustenburg Platinum, the largest producer.

Johannesburg mining analysts estimate Falconbridge's interest in Western to be worth about \$150m, equivalent to US\$30m at the financial exchange rate. In recent months it has been rumoured in Johannesburg that Mobil's interest in Western was up for sale at the right price and some people close to Lonrho have hinted that it would not be averse to decreasing its South African exposure.

Gold Fields of South Africa, the mining house which has announced plans to establish a \$400,000 a year platinum mine in the Transvaal, has been mooted as a possible buyer of Falconbridge's Western shares.

Kenneth Marston, Mining Editor, adds: Mr Gordon Waddell, chairman of Rustenburg Platinum, confirms in his annual review that if the current level of demand for platinum group metals and the prices obtaining in July are maintained, profits will again increase in the current year to next June 30. They rose 65 per cent to R258.2m in 1985-86.

Hoogovens expects big setback

BY OUR FINANCIAL STAFF

HOOGOVENS, the Dutch steel group which is 15 per cent owned by the state, expects a big drop in profits for 1986 as a result of shrinking steel margins and weak trading in minerals.

Profits for the first half are little changed at \$106.6m (\$46m) against \$107m a year ago, despite a significant decline in turnover to \$1.345 bn from \$1.397 bn.

However, the company is pessimistic about trading for the rest of the year, pointing to steep falls in steel selling prices and softening profits in its

minerals division.

Hoogovens' interim report contrasts starkly with the upbeat annual results announced in April when profits for 1985 showed gains of more than a third, and the company put forward plans for a rights issue.

Hoogovens' first-half earnings declined despite a 7 per cent fall in interest costs and a 16 per cent reduction in operating costs. Business expenses were damped by the weak dollar and lower energy and raw material costs.

Net income was hurt by \$18m of pre-tax provisions for the reorganisation of the com-

pany's pipe division, while the year earlier half's profits benefited from \$118.8m of pre-tax gains on the sale of shares in the West German steelmaker Hoesch and from other extraordinary items.

The steel division recorded lower operating income and tightened profit margins because product selling prices declined at a faster rate than energy and raw material costs. Output of raw steel fell to 2.97m tonnes in the half year from 2.64m tonnes 12 months earlier. Rolled steel production was down to 2.55m tonnes from 2.88m tonnes.

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KNP improves first-half income

BY OUR AMSTERDAM CORRESPONDENT

KNP ROYAL Dutch Paper Mills, paper and packaging group, posted a 22 per cent higher net income of \$171.5m (\$30.9m) in the first half of 1986, on slightly better profit margins.

The earnings increase surpassed KNP's expectations and enabled the Maastricht-based company to forecast that 1986 net income would exceed the \$117.3m of last year.

Sales edged lower by 1.5 per cent to \$1.838m for the period

although output volume rose by 6 per cent. Average selling prices were down, partly because of the weaker dollar.

Profit margins improved on the better product mix and lower costs, particularly for energy.

In the paper group, sales showed good growth amid healthy economic conditions while in the packaging division, activities benefited from new product development and a better geographical spread.

● Nedlloyd, the Dutch shipping

group, reported that net profit plunged by one-third to \$121.7m in the first half of 1986 from \$160.2m a year ago.

Lower dollar and oil prices accounted for the profit fall, which Nedlloyd had warned about after last year's decline.

Turnover fell 17 per cent to \$1.21bn, also due to the weaker dollar.

The shipping industry worldwide has been hit by the depreciating US currency and falling oil prices.

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Banks head for Oslo bourse

BY FAY GJETER IN OSLO

THE OSLO bourse is preparing for several new banking shares following the success of Stavanger Bank which has had its offer of shares oversubscribed just three days after the flotation was made.

Finansbanken, like Stavanger a merchant bank, will come to the bourse later this month. Orin, also a merchant bank, has an application for a share issue in front of the Finance Ministry.

In 1984 Norway saw the formation of its first new merchant bank for almost 40 years when Oslobanken was launched. Since then, partly through foreign groups entering the Norwegian

market, the number of new banks has risen sharply.

Stavanger Bank aims to become Norway's "most automated." It has concluded a technical co-operation deal with Vestdata, a Bergen-based computer services company and intends to start operating before Christmas. Its board has already applied for permission to establish a finance company subsidiary, Stavanger Finans.

Finansbanken will offer shares to the public later this month. It will have initial capital of Nkr 100m (\$13.6m). Half this amount has been subscribed in advance by its backers, a group of 58 companies

and individuals, including the Kloster shipping group and the Selmer-Sande building and contracting concern.

Orin, whose 50 founders are headed by two former directors of Sparebanken Oslo Akershus, will have an initial capital of Nkr 50m.

● SDB, the largest Danish saving bank, increased first-half operating profits from Dkr 161m last year to Dkr 187m (\$71m), which was described as "very satisfactory," writes Bjarne Barnes in Copenhagen.

Falling bond and share prices caused an unrealised loss on the securities portfolio of Dkr 462m.

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Nissho Iwai in Hanoi

NISSHO IWAI, the Japanese trading house, plans to set up a two-person resident office in Hanoi, Vietnam, by the end of the year, Agencies report from Tokyo.

The group said yesterday it had been granted Vietnamese Government approval for the office, which would be the first officially established by a Japanese company since the reunification of Vietnam. It will co-ordinate a shrimp farming joint venture, and oil field development in the Mekong Delta.

Nissho Iwai's trade with Vietnam amounts to \$30m to \$40m a year. Trade between the two countries last year amounted to about \$214m, of which imports into Japan accounted for \$65m.

STERLING INDEX

Aug 15 Previous

| Aug 15 | Previous |
|----------|-----------|
| 8.30 am | 71.3 71.5 |
| 9.00 am | 71.8 71.4 |
| 10.00 am | 71.9 71.4 |
| 11.00 am | 71.9 71.4 |
| Noon | 71.8 71.4 |
| 1.00 pm | 71.8 71.4 |
| 2.00 pm | 71.7 71.4 |
| 3.00 pm | 71.8 71.5 |
| 4.00 pm | 71.7 71.4 |

POUND SPOT—FORWARD AGAINST DOLLAR

Aug 15 Day's spread Close One month % Three months %

| Aug 15 | Day's spread | Close | One month | % | Three months | % |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|------|--------------|------|
| US | 1.4952-1.4953 | 1.4945-1.4946 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Canada | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Norway | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Denmark | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Ireland | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| W. Ger. | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Portugal | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Spain | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Italy | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Norway | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| France | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Sweden | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Switzerland | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Austria | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Belgium | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Finland | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Greece | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| Japan | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| South Africa | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |
| UK | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42-0.43 | 0.42 | 1.28-1.29 | 1.28 |

CURRENCY RATES

Aug 15 Bank of England Special Drawing Rights

| Aug 15 | Bank of England | Special Drawing Rights |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Sterling | 1.000000 | 0.655955 |
| US\$ | 1.209004 | 0.783373 |
| Canada | 0.83 | 0.48255 |
| Belgium | 2.48 | 1.62555 |
| France | 6.55 | 4.36555 |
| Germany | 1.93 | 1.28333 |
| Italy | 1.36 | 0.89333 |
| Japan | 163.25 | 107.055 |
| Netherlands | 2.48 | 1.62555 |
| Portugal | 200.48 | 133.655 |
| Spain | 166.36 | 110.255 |
| Sweden | 4.66 | 3.08333 |
| Switzerland | 2.00 | 1.33333 |
| UK | 0.79 | 0.52333 |
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| Sweden | 4.66 | 3.08333 |
| Switzerland | 2.00 | 1.33333 |
| UK | 0.79 | 0 |

COMMODITIES AND AGRICULTURE

REVIEW OF THE WEEK

Crop report stirs up Chicago markets

BY DAVID OWEN IN CHICAGO AND RICHARD MOONEY IN LONDON

SOYABEAN AND grain prices on the Chicago Board of Trade fluctuated widely this week as traders anticipated the US Department of Agriculture's latest crop estimates published Wednesday, and then, after their expectations of another bumper crop had been confirmed, reacted against the fall in the estimates had triggered.

The USDA report confirmed that the coming crops would be below last year's bumper levels but indicated that the recent drought had done less damage than some analysts had suggested.

The biggest price movements were in the soybean complex. The beans, which had touched \$4.50 a bushel on Monday, dipped to \$4.47 immediately after the news but rebounded later. By mid-session yesterday the price was quoted at \$4.75, showing a net gain on the week of half a cent. The nearby August and September delivery months were firmer, however, hauled by short term tightness in soybean meal supplies, and were showing gains on the week of 12 cents and 7 cents respectively.

Meanwhile the December maize position was showing a net rise on the week of 3 cents at \$1.73 a bushel, but December wheat was down 14 cents at \$2.60 a bushel.

Analysis explained the rally in soybeans as a reaction to the report that the US had sold 100,000 tons of soybeans to the Soviet Union.

In addition, they said, traders who had sold short of beans and grains in advance of the report were buying back to cover their positions. "It doesn't mean we have hit the low yet," cautioned one trader.

Meal fundamentals are regarded as more constructive.

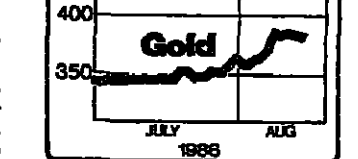
however, with tightening supplies—exacerbated by demand from crushers in Europe and Brazil—said to be forcing producers to reduce running times. Further European demand was reported yesterday and by mid-morning the September contract was trading at \$150.10 a tonne, up \$4.40 on the week.

Soybean traders are now looking forward to the announcement of government price support levels for this year's harvest, which are expected soon. A loan rate of \$1.77 a bushel is increasingly anticipated.

In London and New York platinum and gold provided most excitement as prices were boosted by fears that South Africa might respond to sanctions by restricting supplies. This threat would be much more serious in the case of platinum as the Republic accounts for more than 80 per cent of Western world supplies. So it was this metal which made the pace in the market, touching a peak of \$580 a troy ounce in London before easing back to \$540 on the week.

The bullion market price for gold reached \$394.50 an ounce on Monday and ended the week \$18 up at \$382.75 an ounce. Coffee continued to be the liveliest of London's futures markets with daily movements in the November position ranging between 285 and 235 a tonne. But the see-saw action of the market meant that the net trading range on the week was a relatively modest \$145. The see-saw ended the week on a strong upswing with November coffee gaining \$30 to \$1,902.50 a tonne yesterday, up \$50 on balance.

Having seen the coffee price



as high as \$3,000 a tonne and as low as \$1,600 a tonne this year speculators seem anxious not to be left behind by the next decisive movement. But there is little to give them a clue as to which direction this will take. With Brazil's peak frost risk period now in the past and this year's drought scare fading the bulls are pinning their hopes on rumours that last year's four-month drought reduced the 1986/87 by even more than the 50 per cent already discounted. The situation should become clearer around the middle of next week, however, when the Brazilian Coffee Institute publishes an updated crop assessment.

On the London Metal Exchange lead values regained further ground, helped by figures from the American Bureau of Metal Statistics showing that refiners stocks of the metal were down 16,787 tonnes and production was down 5,996 tonnes in July. With rumours of continued labour unrest at Australia's Broken Hill mines, despite last month's return to work, providing further upward pressure the cash quotation ended the week \$9 higher at \$288.75 a tonne.

By contrast the cash nickel price ended \$119 down on the week at \$2,503.50 a tonne reflecting recent heavy Soviet sales of the metal, slack buying interest on the part of stainless steel manufacturers and the absence of producer support.

US MARKETS

PLATINUM FUTURES closed unchanged with commission houses and locals dominating trading and the trade remaining on the sidelines, reports Heinold. The market fell away initially on the fact that the bill for US sanctions against South Africa would not be voted on before the Congress recess, before being bid up towards the close as traders squared positions ahead of the weekend. Coffee futures closed sharply higher to limit-up but the surge was brief and prices declined under the session highs. The burst of buying came on this volume. Most of the short-covering was related to a report that the president of the IBC said damage to the old coffee crop in Brazil was worse than expected and that the outlook was for possible problems with the new crop.

NEW YORK

ALUMINIUM 40,000 lb. cents/lb. Close High Low Prev. Aug 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Sept 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Oct 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Nov 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Dec 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Jan 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Feb 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Mar 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Apr 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. May 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Jun 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Jul 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Aug 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Sep 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Oct 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Nov 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Dec 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Jan 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Feb 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Mar 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Apr 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. May 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Jun 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Jul 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Aug 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Sep 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Oct 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Nov 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Dec 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Jan 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Feb 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. Mar 52.10 52.10 52.00 52.00. 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AUTHORISED UNIT TRUSTS & INSURANCES

[illegible]

BUILDING, TIMBER, ROADS—Cont. DRAPERY & STORES—Cont.

هكذا عن الأصل

REGIONAL & IRISH STOCKS

The following is a selection of Regional and Irish stocks, the latter bolded and quoted in Irish currency.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|------------------|---------|-----|
| Almery Inc 20p | 39 | | Fin 13% 97/02 | 316 1/2 | 1/4 |
| Bank of New York | 48 | +1 | Armco | 610 | |
| Bank of America | 48 | | CP Mills | 45 | |
| Bank of Boston | 48 | | Carroll Inds | 161 | 1/4 |
| Bank of Chicago | 48 | | DeWitt Gas | 30 | |
| Bank of Cleveland | 48 | | Hart Ind. & L.I. | 31 | |
| Bank of Dallas | 48 | | Neftco Oil | 31 | |
| Bank of Denver | 48 | | Irish Roads | 90 | |
| Bank of Detroit | 48 | | Ulster | 220 | |
| Bank of Kansas City | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Louisville | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Miami | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Milwaukee | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Minneapolis | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of New Orleans | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of New York | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Philadelphia | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Pittsburgh | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of St. Louis | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of St. Paul | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of San Francisco | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Seattle | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Springfield | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Tampa | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Washington | 48 | | | | |
| Bank of Wichita | 48 | | | | |

IRISH
 10% 11 1/4 1980 316 1/2
 10% 11 1/4 1980 316 1/2

"Recent Issues" and "Rights" Page 13

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FINANCIAL TIMES

Saturday August 16 1986

WHAT INVESTMENT NOW? 0800 414161

Tamil refugees traced back to W Germany

BY RUPERT CORNWELL IN BONN

THE MYSTERY of the Tamil refugees rescued off Newfoundland on Monday is virtually solved. According to Hamburg police, the 154 Tamil left a port on the River Weser in northern Germany early on July 28, to be smuggled across the Atlantic in the hold of a West German coastal steamer for DM 5,000 (£1,623) a head.

A third man, a Turk, was detained yesterday on suspicion of involvement in the ring, which is also believed to include Hamburg brokerage business. The Tamil travelled on the Aurigae, a 425-ton steamer, for which the captain, an unnamed 45-year-old West German, was paid DM 700,000.

There are many indications that a further shipment of Tamil was intended for September 10—which may explain why the 154 picked up off Canada stuck so doggedly to their original version that they had arrived direct from southern India after a 35-day voyage.

US announces successor to Challenger

BY NANCY DUNNE IN WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE yesterday took the US space agency Nasa out of the commercial satellite business and announced that a space orbiter would be built to succeed the ill-fated shuttle Challenger.

Nasa payloads would be devoted primarily to national security, foreign policy and space exploration purposes, although the occasional commercial satellites would be accepted in the interests of foreign policy.

Denmark to maintain policies on deficit

By Hilary Barnes in Copenhagen

DENMARK'S MINORITY non-socialist Government is not planning to change its economic policies to reduce the country's large current account deficit.

Eurobond debut for BT

By Alexander Nicoll and Clare Pearson

BRITISH TELECOM yesterday made its debut in the Eurobond market with a \$250m issue. Its first long-term borrowing since privatisation in 1984.

Recovery in equities continues

BY GEORGE GRAHAM

LONDON SHARE prices continued their recovery yesterday, more than making up the ground they had lost in the previous week.

Currency markets have reacted nervously over the past two days to publication of first half figures showing a record DFR 18bn (£1.56bn) deficit.

Probe into cement price fixing

BY ANDREW TAYLOR

THE PRICE-FIXING agreement between Britain's three big cement manufacturers, cleared by the Restrictive Practices Court in 1962 and 1973, is to be investigated on behalf of the Office of Fair Trading.

Blue Circle, the country's biggest cement producer, said yesterday that common pricing had brought stability to the industry and had helped to guarantee supply and quality of service to customers.

CHIEF PRICE CHANGES YESTERDAY

Table with 2 columns: Item, Price change. Includes Treas. 11pc 03-07 £1184 +, Treas. 21pc 11-13 +, Argyl. Bnt. 13-15 +, etc.

WORLDWIDE WEATHER

Table with 4 columns: Location, Y'day, Y'day, Y'day. Includes Alcala, Alcala, Alcala, etc.

Continued from Page 1 Rolls-Royce

GE's Cincinnati-based engine division believes its pact with the British company should have precluded it from bidding for the order. This is emphatically denied by Rolls-Royce.

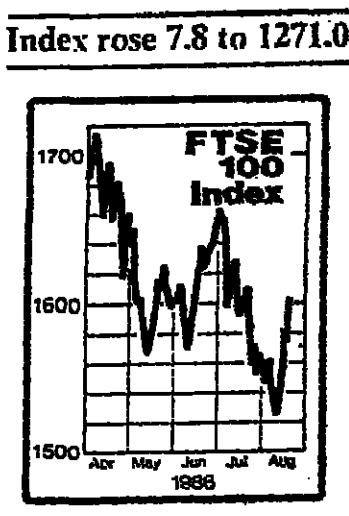
Continued from Page 1 Volvo

Volvo, Ohio and Utah. Mr Sten Langenius, managing director of Volvo Truck Corporation, said the deal represented a "great opportunity to strengthen our dealer network."

THE LEX COLUMN

Paint stripping Hanson style

In little more time than it took Hanson Trust to buy SCM, the purchase price has almost been recouped through sales of some of the parts.



Index rose 7.8 to 1271.0. The worst performing sector in the equity market was the composites, but then they produced outstanding profits and dividends.

That is not to say ICI has paid over the odds for Glidden at a historic multiple of 17.2, other US paint companies have sold for more.

The worst performing sector in the equity market was the composites, but then they produced outstanding profits and dividends.

Estate agents. Estate agents are regarded like dentists: people use them only when they have to and do not expect to enjoy the experience.

Markets

A week ago the bull market in equities was thought to be the victim of a nasty midsummer fever. It now appears that the beast was simply a convincing hypochondriac.

Tricentral

Tricentral is now performing a very creditable impersonation of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow.

Results from Hambro Countrywide this week showed how profitable the business is at present, thanks to soaring house sales funded from freely available mortgages.

Europe: go for the encore. Following spectacular growth in 1985 European markets have consolidated in the first half of this year. The Oppenheimer European Growth Trust aims to capitalise on the obvious benefits of low interest rates, low inflation, dramatically reduced energy costs and the general climate of political stability.

WEEKEND FT

Saturday August 16 1986

MARKETS • FINANCE & THE FAMILY • PROPERTY • TRAVEL • MOTORING • DIVERSIONS • HOW TO SPEND IT • BOOKS • ARTS • TV

Vanishing landscapes

IN THE LAST five years the English landscape has become a political issue. This month farmers will be setting fire to it as usual, and familiar questions will loom through the smoke. Can we really abandon our "national heritage" to an industry of sprayers, hedge-rippers and prairie-makers? Why should we pay property owners to produce barley, most of which is sold for animals abroad? Why are we allowing miles of downland and moor to be ploughed and old hedgerows to be torn out, turning Britain into a beastly North European plain? Is it all the fault of the EEC?

Whenever these questions are raised, farmers answer them in the name of "land-owning." Leave schooling to the teachers and farming to the land-owners, they say. Those who drive up and down their land on tractors and in cars are best able to put it to "economic" uses. But are these uses really "economic" if they depend on enormous subsidies? Questions like this raise cultural issues, and land-owning alone cannot cope with them. Like nature, landscape is an idea which humans invent: nowadays, responsible "land-owning" does not bring a clear idea of what a landscape should be, yet the farmers' opponents are equally negative—reduced to conservation for conservation's sake.

Landscape is an idea which has often been sharpened by art, yet here, modern landowners can exact very little help. The countryside's bleak treatment is related to the cultural barrenness: the one reflects on the other. Nowadays, very few poets can evoke a landscape and next to nobody is writing memorable poems about the countryside. Landscape painting is in a dark age, and the art of designing a landscape has suffered likewise, the skills being divided into separate compartments. There are architects, landscape architects, and landscape gardeners. It is hard enough to trust an architect to design a building, but most of them would not even trust themselves to design its surrounding grounds. Most landscape architects concern themselves with the gradients of new roads and drive-ways or tasks like concealing a factory or siting swimming-pools in country homes. Landscape gardeners usually find a canvas of two acres too big for them, many of them living with the idea that "landscaping" means patios, walling, and fiddly ornamental ponds.

We are not the first generation for whom the reshaping of the countryside has been a serious issue. Two hundred years ago, hedge-ripping, land-use and anti-social landowning were prominent matters of complaint. What has changed is the result. We have allowed the landscape to be savaged, until admirers of England's pleasant green have to go to Somerset or Derbyshire in order to catch a glimpse of it. Our predecessors also ripped hedges and remodelled ground. They too farmed for profit, but the result was an ideal of landscape which became a British export, and which gave shape to the idea of England.

Two hundred years after Capability Brown and amid the annual row on stubble burning, Robin Lane Fox makes a new plea for England's green and pleasant land

Nowadays, nobody wants to copy our prairie-farming. How did the past do so much better?

The answer is not only one of economics, as if modern landowners are the first people to need to squeeze money from their estates. In the 18th century, people also wanted a return from land. Nor is it a question of changing scale. In an age of bizarre institutional ownership, estates have not shrunk to a smaller, less economic scale. In fact the answer is as much cultural as agricultural: in the past, the landscape profited from an alliance of art, aesthetic argument, and individual genius.

One pre-condition for its golden age was an awareness of landscape painting. Familiarity has now blunted this influence, but it is hard to imagine many institutional landowners looking at their farm-portfolio with the landscapes of their Gainsboroughs in mind. In the past the Grand Tour through Europe to Italy meant something more than sunbathing to the rising generation of landowners, many of whom collected European paintings or bought artistic souvenirs. Even those who missed out could make amends on their return. By the 1730s, prints of great landscape paintings were becoming a lively market in England, and where no originals were available, dealers had them faked and sold forgeries instead.

As a result, people began to have ideas of how a landscape should look: they responded to the idealised backgrounds of great Italian paintings and to the mathematical precision of landscape by Poussin. Above all, they were seduced by those alternating bands of light and shade which lead the eye to the horizon of dreamy landscape by the master artist, Claude Lorraine.

A sound taste in landscape was a mark of a person's accomplishment. There was an art in finding exactly the right place from which to view a prospect and where best to stand to frame a view



Illustration by Michael Frith: based on Richard Cosway portrait of Capability Brown.

with trees. Women, too, were expected to show proficiency, as Jane Austen's novels later remind us.

It was from these artistic and literary vistas that the idea of an English landscape developed. The first person to "leap the fence and see all nature was a garden" was also a painter, William Kent, whose sense of landscape planning is still evident at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, and in Rousham Park in Oxfordshire. Prairie-farming of the past 20 years has greatly spoiled the effects of Rousham's grand design, but enough survives to show how Kent's eye conceived it. It opened out past buildings which alluded to the Greek and Roman classics, another link we have broken. It stretched into painterly views, ordered but natural and combinable with farming.

It is not true that Kent and his predecessors worked for landowners to whom profit was irrelevant. Kent's more natural style of landscape developed at a time when long avenues of hardwood trees were also fashionable. They radiated far and wide into the landscape, like French geometric gardens, but they were also seen by their owners as a sound investment and were recommended for that reason. Landowners profited, while creating a landscape which was artistic: it was still possible to graze and grow timber in a Kent design.

These early experiments led to lively public discussions throughout the 18th century. Poets like James Thomson expressed similar ideas in their landscape-poems, while the recent exhibitions of Richard Wilson's paintings showed how 18th century artists took this type of scenery as the model for their landscape form. People argued about the idea of the beautiful in nature and scenery: the various parties held strong views and taste was itself a sign of moral or political conviction. In polemic, clipped formal gardens were equated with tyranny or mindless Tory allegiance. It was evident to some that beauty

resided in a curving serpentine line, to others in rugged, awesome scenery.

This climate of argument and artistic inter-connection did not produce the landscape which Europe admired and imitated. It was a necessary pre-condition, not a sufficient cause. Nor were new tricks of design or technique responsible, though historians like to emphasise them. If the garden was to be opened out into the landscape, it was important to have a smooth transition between the two. In the 1720s, landscape did invent the ha-ha, the walled ditch which brought vistas of cows and grazing sheep to the edge of a garden lawn, while excluding the animals themselves. The ha-ha, surely, was invented because people wished to create these improved natural landscapes. It was not the reason why they created them in the first place.

This culture of invention and argument was then enlarged by one man's particular talent. Blenheim Park, Petworth House, Burghley, Chatsworth, Longleat: these stately homes are only a few of the places transformed by Britain's most famous landscaper, "Capability" Brown. Until his death in 1783, Brown was the beneficiary of an age in which the idea of landscape was widely discussed, yet he himself gave it a direction which went beyond painting and poetry. His nickname, Capability, was explained by his favourite habit of assuring prospective clients that their broad acres had "great capabilities."

It is just over 200 years since his death, yet his origins and particular talents are still mysterious. One point, however, marks him off immediately from anyone in our culture: he was an architect of great houses as well as a designer of huge landscapes. We do not know how he learned this art, but certainly he entered no degree-course or institute of design. At Croome Court in Worcestershire, or Claremont in Surrey, we can still admire a Brown house. Our own age has made architecture a

"qualified" profession, but nobody would claim that the qualifications have improved the results. Brown, on the other hand, spanned several boundaries, between building houses and planning huge estates, between designing a superb ceiling (at Corsham Court, in Wiltshire) or designing lakes, curving rivers and landscapes of well-placed trees. Nowadays, these arts are separated: we could hardly believe that one "untrained" person could master them all.

Brown's best-known capability was his gift for conceiving broad, green parks, which ran away from a great house. They were broken in their middle distance by a curving line of water, while clumps of trees led the eye into the further distance: the boundaries and vistas were liberally planted with belts and copses. Like all geniuses, Brown was fiercely and unjustly attacked. He was accused of destruction as if he was making empty wastelands, like a modern East Anglian landowner. In fact, he planted trees by the thousand, but sited them in subtle groups and lines. His lakes and rivers did, admittedly, have a tendency to leak; he could also be quite ruthless about intervening habitations, moving a whole village if it spoiled his design. By moderns, he has been accused of a lack of interest in plants: a landscaper, not a gardener. The middle distance and the broader prospect may have been his particular strengths, but the complaint may not be just. We know that on one occasion Brown was concerned to sow red clover in the grass of a natural landscape. At Petworth in Sussex we have a list of garden-plants, to be ordered for positioning near the great house. Admittedly the list is the only survivor and the plants are rather ordinary, but elsewhere Brown designed a greenhouse, and when we know of his work in much smaller spaces, his business did include a concern for plants.

His lack of interest in gardening has probably been exaggerated, and so, it seems, has the caricature of Brown as a

"plain man with single theory." Enemies attacked him as a "peasant emerging from the melon-pit" and it is quite true that he began his career as an undergardener in Northumberland, his place of birth. However, his support and close relationship with the local landowning baronet, Sir William Lorraine, have long attracted comment. The latest life of Brown, written by Thomas Blinde this year, contains a neat conjecture to explain it. Brown, he suggests, may have been born on the right of the ha-ha, as an illegitimate son of the neighbouring Sir William. The only evidence for this idea is a tradition passed down by recent vicars of Brown's home parish, at Kirkcubright.

Yet it would explain oddities in Brown's early years, the unexpected marriage of his brother to the daughter of Sir William, and the baronet's kind introduction of his gardener to great clients further south. Otherwise, we know nothing of the sources of Brown's style. He worked at Stowe, perhaps with William Kent, but he indulged in none of the literary conceits of Kent's manner and owed no direct debt to European art. Ultimately, he is a natural English genius. I have always felt that the broad natural prospects and curving rivers of his native Northumberland must have influenced his eye.

We do know, however, that Brown attained great social esteem. He had a good way with clients. He could command large fees, while knowing when to leave the bill's exact size to his patron's better judgment (he banked at Drummonds, where his accounts are one of the best indications of his patrons). He sent his son to Eton and enjoyed the intimacy with the elder William Pitt. "Go you and adorn England," Pitt was said to have told him. "Go you, and preserve it." Brown replied to the Prime Minister.

Such an alliance of taste and politics is a marked contrast to anything in our own times. Brown's masterpiece is his landscaping of the lake and main vista at Blenheim Park, the best example of the style which was to become the great English export in the visual arts. In Germany, an "Engländer Garten" is still a curving landscape of grass and trees, not a flowery "Englishwoman's garden." In France, after Napoleon's defeat, the English style was briefly dominant.

Since then, we have destroyed most of Brown's original designs, during our continuing rape of the landscape. Two of the best surviving examples are the park at Petworth in Sussex and the great lake and walks at Wotton Underwood in Buckinghamshire. Twenty years ago, however, the grounds of Wotton were in decay and about to be sold in lots for a housing-estate, while the park at Petworth was threatened with a by-pass from the nearby town which was to run straight through its foreground.

Having erased most of his work, we have also lost all contact with the culture which produced them. We, too, have remodelled the landscape, using bigger and cheaper machines than anything Brown commanded (his device for transplanting trees seems quite humble beside a modern bulldozer). We, too, have opened huge vistas and pulled out hedges by the thousand. Culturally, the result has been vandalism and disaster. One cause—not symptom—is the fact that the idea of landscape has passed out of influential debate. It is said that one of Brown's doubters once told the great man that he did so very much hope he would die before Mr Brown, because he wanted to see Heaven before Brown had improved its capabilities. Now, we are all too late. We can only hope that any Brownian parks beyond the grave have not been ploughed and sown with beastly oil-seed rape.

The Long View

Behind the world's ugly awakening

KIPLING said it: If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs. And he was right; the ability to make your own judgments, and shrug off fashionable hysteria, is a real test of manhood, and the one that matters most to investors.

That kind of manhood is badly needed at the moment by anyone exposed to much market advice, especially from the US. A good deal of the guru community there has swung straight from the ill-based euphoria of last winter into abject panic.

We all know by now that these people are not infallible, although hardly any of them show the engaging frankness of Don Conlan, of Los Angeles, who simply reprints his main January forecasts with terse comments, wrong, wrong, wrong again.

He might have been wrong, but at least he seems to be wrong in a level-headed kind of way and his latest forecast (modestly optimistic) seems likelier to prove trustworthy than the new wailing of those who seem to think that, because they have made some bad forecasts, the whole world must have fallen apart.

That is just pompous, and inventing new terms to describe one's own inner confusion does not really provide new insights. "Riot point in the markets" and "credit implosion" are two choice specimens from this week's prepare-to-meet-thy-doom selection. They are meaningless.

Strip away the new coined verbiage and there are two reasons for the present alarms. One is the much-discussed pause in world growth, which

Anthony Harris argues that the prophets of gloom and doom have gone too far and that Kipling had the right idea when he praised the virtues of keeping a cool head



a year now; and the other is the fact that a lot of borrowers are unlikely to be able to repay their debts, which has been obvious for about four years. These familiar facts are causing alarm mainly among wishful thinkers (those who deceived themselves into thinking that falling prices would act as a large economic stimulus, thus standing the whole of economic history on its head), and those who thought that debt risk was confined to what they regard as banana republics. Bankruptcies in Texas, and the fact that the US Government itself can't stop borrowing have been an ugly awakening.

Readers of this newspaper cannot have been taken by surprise either by the slowdown or by the debt problems; but

now that they are frightening some commentators, it is worth thinking coolly about them again. Just how bad is the news?

So far as world growth is concerned, the first point to grasp is that the news is unreliable. So far as Britain is concerned, we were reminded of this only a few days ago by Dr John Muellbauer and his team in Oxford. They estimate that recent official figures for UK output are a good 2 per cent too low — which means that growth is still with us and productivity is still improving.

There are three good reasons for believing it. First, we know how official figures tend to go wrong when the structure of the economy is changing. Second, the strength of profits, the rise in job vacancies and complaints of skill shortages do not sound like economic stagnation. Third, similar mistakes on the gloomy side are emerging in the US.

The American story shows not only what can happen — output for the year up to last spring has now been revised up by 1.2 per cent — but how. The statisticians, who take sample surveys of familiar industries, were missing part of the growth of services. This is confirmed by a household check on employment, which uncovered more than a million previously unrecorded jobs.

It is not only statisticians who are caught out by changes in the structure of demand. Banks get caught out, too. That is why the decline in the market for the major industrial products of the past — steel, ships, and the energy required to make these heavyweight items — has left such a trail of financial damage.

"Core" industries, which

loans were made, are crashing; natural resources, which seemed to make countries safe credit risks, have lost value. These are real problems, certainly; but it is absurd to panic about them at this late date.

So far, we have been concerned only with the situation as it is now, but at least we have a level-headed assessment to set against the panic one. Growth is disappointing, but it has probably slowed down rather than stopping. There are some ugly credit problems in the world but they are well-known and discounted in present asset prices.

What about the future? The biggest problem we seem to be facing in the real world is man-made: government policies, especially in the surplus countries, do seem calculated to depress growth. Policy-makers in Bonn and Tokyo seem obsessed with the problems of the recent past — such as inflation — and with the retirement bulge of the distant future, and unwilling to tackle the present problems of imbalance and sluggishness.

These policies are extremely annoying to those who disagree with them, but they would surely be changed if they really did cause a recession. Meanwhile, they do help to make room for a further fall in interest rates; and although this will probably not do much for the real economy, it will help to ease financial strain. The whole condition sounds uncomfortable, but far from fatal.

Our psychological problems could get worrying, though. If the doom-sayers get too much attention, so that lenders become obsessed with risk, and businessmen with retrenchment, they could provoke the disasters they predict. Happily, the market suggests at the moment that

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Sunny days return

SUDDENLY, it's summer again on Wall Street. After falling back sharply from the record high reached on July 2, when the Dow Jones Industrial Average touched 1908.03, the stock market has drifted for the past month or so in relatively modest volume. But in the first four days of this week the Dow surged ahead by just over 60 points, regaining about half of what it had lost in the previous five weeks.

There was little in the economic statistics to trigger this change in mood. Retail sales in July were up by only 0.1 per cent, suggesting that while consumers are still alive they are hardly providing the kick the economy needs. The industrial production figures yesterday showed a drop of 0.1 per cent in July, and the news from the corporate front also tended to the gloomy side — another thumping \$74m loss from People Express and 300 redundancies at Convergant Technologies, a big supplier of hardware to IBM.

The rally took its cue partly — and inconspicuously — from the recent changes in the oil industry. Whereas the fall in oil prices had sparked much of the rise in June and early July, the renewed upward swing in oil prices is now seen as a benefit to part of the US economy, particularly the American financial sector. Some of the heavily indebted energy-producing nations, analysts argue, should now be in a better position to

repay their debts to the US banks.

More importantly, investors were encouraged by the rally in the credit markets following the completion of the Treasury auctions in the previous week. In the wake of the refunding rates at the long end of the bond market have fallen from 7.56 per cent to around 7.30 per cent, fortified by strong indications that the Western industrialised countries may be moving into a new round of co-ordinated interest rate cuts.

Wall Street had expected little of the meeting this week between Paul Volcker, chair-

man of the Federal Reserve Board, and Karl Otto Pohl, head of the West German Bundesbank, when their paths crossed at a funeral in West Germany. But by the end of the week it was clear that the two men had more than a casual encounter, and that the intense US pressure for its trading partners to move towards more stimulative economic policies was having some effect.

Yet, while this renewed spark of enthusiasm for equities has left the Dow challenging the 1,950 mark, it has by no means fuelled universal confidence that the sun will keep shining on the market. The overwhelming confidence that share prices have nowhere

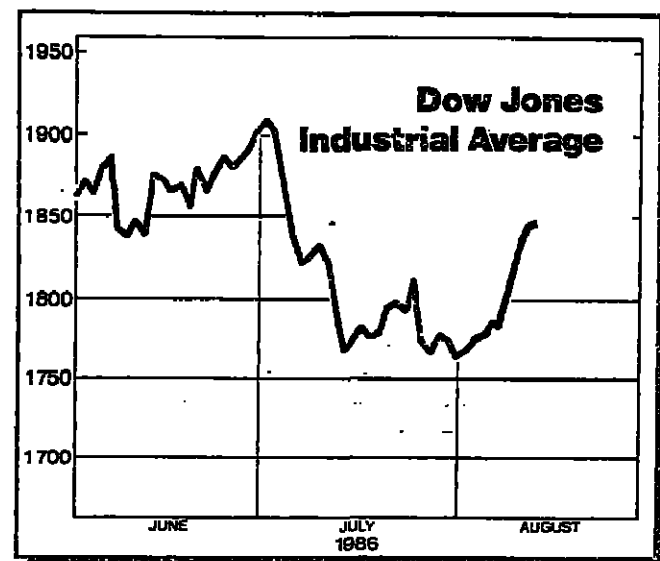
to go but up is missing at the moment, and brokers report that small investors are not by any means committing themselves as heavily to stocks as they did during the heady days of the bull market.

Corporate profits — or the lack of them — are one of the main problems facing investors. With the economy only spluttering along at the moment, the prospects of a resurgence in earnings, and the accompanying increase in asset values and dividends, seems remote over at least the medium term.

At the same time, there is a growing sentiment that the bull market is now growing too long in the tooth to retain its vitality. On Wednesday of this week, the market passed a milestone that concentrated the mind acutely on this issue. It was just four years ago — on Friday, August 13 — that the present bull market started, with the Dow breaking a long losing streak to start heading upwards. Since then, US stocks have more than doubled in value — indeed, at the height in early July they were almost 146 per cent ahead. Only one rally, the 56-week advance that followed the great crash in 1929, has lasted longer in Wall Street history.

Wall Street

Despite the predictions from some quarters that this simply cannot go on — Eliot Janeway, who has been prophesying doom for many months, concluded this week that we are



seeing a "summer market rally" that is headed for "autumn storms" — many opportunists are still finding value in US stocks.

This week, for example, L'Air Liquide, the French manufacturer of industrial gases, announced an agreed \$1bn bid for Big Three Industries of Houston. At \$29 a share, the offer values the Texas company at almost 20 times last year's earnings — on the face of it, a pretty high price to pay for a group that is to some degree dependent on the oil sector. If the oil business turns, however, the acquisition could seem fairly cheap. On the basis of the group's record 1981 profits, L'Air Liquide is paying somewhat less than 12 times earnings for Big Three.

Meanwhile, take-over speculation continued to bubble around CBS, the leading US broadcasting group, where the Tisch family interests have built up a 25 per cent stake and are said to be considering a bid for the rest of the company or a sale to a third party. If an offer came, it would undoubtedly cause enormous excitement — quite apart from its pre-eminent position in the communications business, CBS would cost \$3.2bn at its present share price.

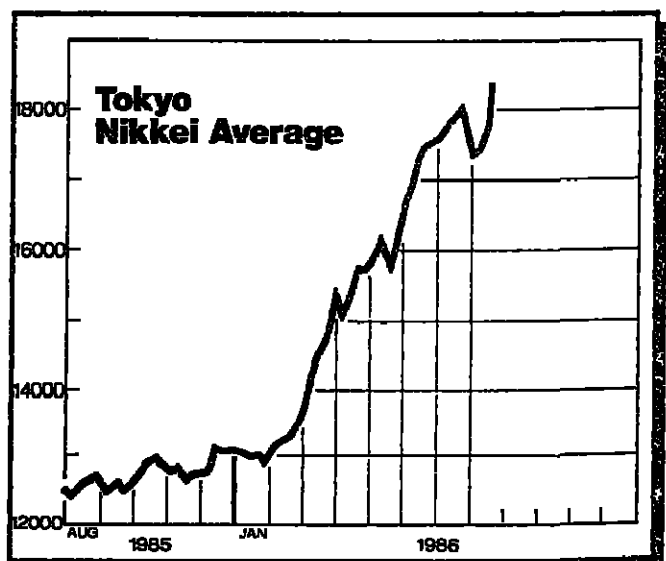
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Terry Dodsworth

Waiting for the 'quake

EVERYONE but the stock market is on holiday in Japan. A phone call to any of the major companies will result in a recorded message, saying they are all away. Traffic jams are at their seasonal best and even Tokyo's famous fish market is closed, leaving sushi lovers bereft of their favourite food.

It's called the Great National Migration. But over at the Stock Exchange there is only one kind of migration going on, and that is up. The expected consolidation of prices lasted a few days towards the end of last month, after which time stocks continued on their relentless upward course. "Why bother with a consolidation when everyone knows the market is going to go up again after it?" said a broker in Tokyo yesterday. That was clearly the mood of investors this week as the Nikkei Index opened on Monday at 17,436 and closed at another all-time high of 18,376. The question for all those involved in the Tokyo market remains: can it go any further, especially as the Japanese economy is clearly slipping into a lower gear? Forecasts of 4 per cent growth in GNP are now expected to be too optimistic by as much as a factor of two. Exports are slowing, export margins are invisible, and no stimu-



lative domestic spending package is yet on the table.

Despite this, however, most brokers, both foreign and domestic, believe there is still life after 18,000. Some say the bull market will last for years, others say months. There are still others, of course, who are simply holding their breath. The main themes in Tokyo remain almost constant. Too much money is chasing too few investment opportunities of the exciting variety. Interest rates are at record lows and may go lower, bond yields remain unexciting. At the same time Japan's trade surplus in dollar terms is still growing. Institutional investors are continuing their march into equities while individuals are getting keener by the minute. As of the end of this March a new 610,000 individual investors had jumped into the ring.

A few factors loom ahead which could alter this high-demand picture. The Government is expected to wade knee-deep into construction bonds this autumn, while the number of corporate convertible bonds are also expected to rise. Further, the flotation of Nippon Telephone and Telegraph promises to soak up a fair bit of cash. However, the optimists claim that the flotation, which will be managed somewhat similarly to British Telecom, will merely bring more players to the Stock Exchange party. Further, the optimists say that the slow-down of the economy works in the stock market's favour. The argument runs that when people have less money, they put less into productive assets and more into financial assets. In addition, talk that the tax break on individual small savings might be lifted this year gives further fuel to the argument that more money will be flowing towards equities, not less.

In the meantime, brokers continue to scurry for reasons

why investors should keep buying. "Nomura won't lie down for a bear market," said a foreign broker. "Yesterday, although a number of foreign brokers now see December as a black hole, they admit that every psychological barrier in the book is being broken."

The story continues to be domestic stocks. Brokers like to point out that the domestic portion of GNP is going up nicely, even though exports in yen terms are sagging. The

Tokyo

Government's expected supplementary budget is not expected to cause fireworks — ¥1,000b in extra spending is expected to boost GNP by just 0.2 per cent. Nonetheless, in select areas such as construction, land and railway stocks, the benefit will be greater.

Brokers are currently steering their clients towards the heavy, capital-intensive stocks such as Kawasaki Heavy Industries, IHI and shipbuilders. These stocks are not for the faint-hearted: Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding is suffering heavy losses.

Other favourites at the moment are the financials, specifically the trust banks and securities houses. Nomura seem to know no limit and few expect it to find one. Despite its sky-high p/e brokers argue that as the company does not consolidate all its earnings, the measurement is irrelevant.

At the moment, brokers are saying that only an earthquake could unsettle the Tokyo market. But then, most of the people fuelling the boom have never lived through a bear market. Unless they have learned how to defy gravity, common sense says they will have to learn the hard way. It's just a question of when.

Carla Rapoport

Investors seek haven in gold

prices jump on the possibility that the companies may not be able to sell their product?" asked Moley.

"Making hay while the sun shines? Anyway, what's so strange about the metal prices going up? You were forecasting this a month ago," I pointed out.

"I know," admitted the mole, "but for different reasons." "Look," he explained, the rise in platinum makes sense because South Africa produces about 80 per cent of the world's supplies. So, if South Africa stopped selling platinum the West would feel the pinch. "Mind you," he continued, "the Republic would lose much-needed revenue and wouldn't be too pleased at handing a highly-profitable export market on a plate to the Russians, who are the other major producers

of platinum group metals." "There's another angle to be considered, Moley," "What's that?"

"Why," I said, "the fact that South Africa's platinum is produced by only three major mining operations which are fairly close to each other and mainly run by black labour. They would be very vulnerable to any outbreak of civil unrest in the area." "That's true," he admitted. "But there are plenty of gold mines in the country and I can't see any reason why the South Africans should want to stop selling their gold when there are plentiful supplies to be had elsewhere in the world." "As the headmaster said

when he raised his cane, it would be a case of 'this hurts me more than it does you' Moley," I said.

"That dates you," chuckled the mole. "But putting the boot onto the other foot, you might say the same about the nutty idea that the rest of the world should sell its stocks of gold in order to drive the price down and so hit the South Africans." "Anyway," he continued, "the South African situation is not the real reason why the gold price has been going up. What it has done is to focus attention on the metal and trigger off an overdue rise in the price which reflects other factors." "Money looking for a haven against the current disarray in many world currencies and economies that we have been talking about recently?"

the price could reach \$500 per ounce by the end of this year, Moley had scamped away to that bolt-hole of his behind my chair.

"Stright," agreed the mole. "There's concern about slowing economic growth, especially in the US. Tom Butler of Samuel Montagu, the merchant bankers, has pointed to the weakness of the US dollar, the country's increasing trade deficit and concerns about its banking system which is burdened by third world debts. No wonder paper money has been finding its way to the gold market." "At least we've not got rising inflation — well, not yet," I added.

That really would push up the price of gold," replied the mole. "But it seems safe to say that, after a three-year downturn in the price, there is now a change in investment thinking on gold and a bull market looks to have begun."

Before I could ask him if he agreed with Richard Lake of stockbrokers Savory Milin that

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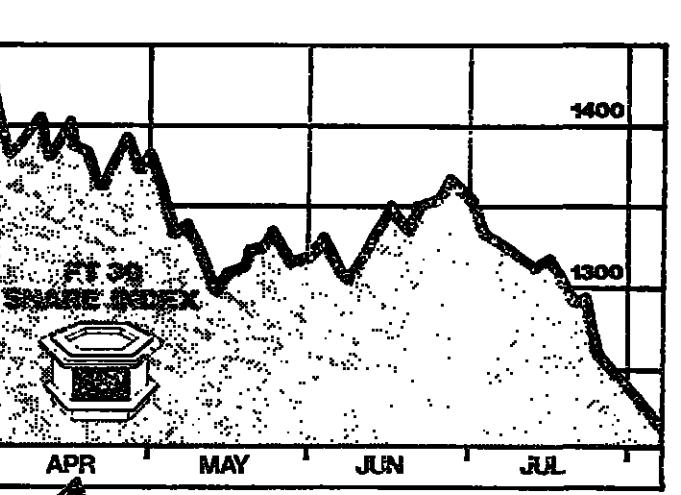
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Richard Tomkins counts down to the big issue

Say yes to TSB

POLITICAL controversy notwithstanding, the Trustee Savings Bank's £1bn flotation has now acquired such momentum that few seriously doubt it will take place next month.

Few doubt, either, that it is going to be a big success. Indeed, the fervour in some quarters is such that the offer for sale is beginning to look like an irritating formality to be gone through before investors take their profits and retire on the proceeds to Marbella.

But is the flotation's success really such a certainty?

In terms of response, the answer is almost certainly yes. This week, the TSB sent a frisson of excitement through the investment community by dropping another of the veils from its flotation plans and revealing measures aimed at putting the shares within reach of "millions" of investors.

Half the shares will be reserved for priority applications from customers and staff and the rest will be made specially attractive to small investors.

For example, minimum investment levels will be low, at £200 for priority applicants and £400 for the public. Payments will be due in two equal instalments, so some investors will be able to buy into the issue for as little as £100.

Free shares will be offered as perks to small investors.

Staff will get £150 worth free and there will be a one-for-10 loyalty bonus on holdings of £5,000 and under which are kept for the first three years.

The TSB also revealed this week that 12m preferential applicants and 500,000 members of the public had already registered for prospectuses. If these people alone applied for just their minimum shareholdings, nearly half the issue would be spoken for—and there is still another month to go before the flotation.

Level of subscription is one thing, though. The premium on first-day dealings is another.

In this respect, the TSB's ploy of putting the issue into the hands of small investors looks wily, however unintentionally so, for the effect will be to starve the institutions of shares and send them clamouring for these in the aftermath, thus providing that all-important premium.

The catch is that while less sophisticated investors may be relatively insensitive to the more arcane measures of share values such as price/earnings multiples, to the institutions these statistics are vital; and if the institutions believe the shares are fully valued, they will simply keep their hands in their pockets.

Never mind the TSB's marketing skills, then. The crucial question remains the price at which the shares are offered.

One of the favourite reasons advanced for optimism on this score is that the Government will want to whet investors' appetites for Britain's biggest-ever stock market flotation—the privatisation of British Gas—in November.

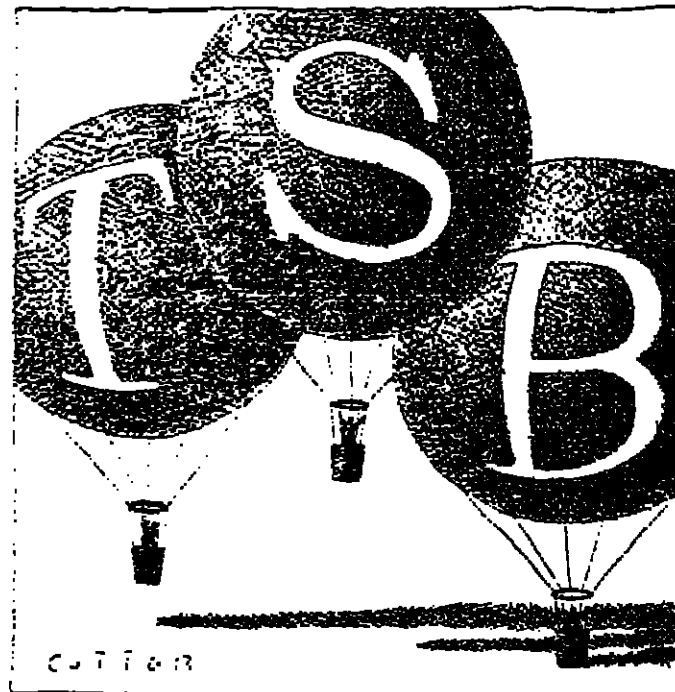
On the face of it, this argument looks a little tenuous. The Government, after all, insists that it does not own the TSB and it will receive none of the proceeds from the flotation, so it has no direct say in the pricing. Nevertheless, there are all kinds of subtle pressures that could probably be brought to bear if need be.

The chances are they will not be necessary, for there are at least two other good reasons why the TSB will want its shares priced attractively.

The first is that although the TSB has plans for putting the £1bn proceeds to effective use, it is hardly in desperate need of the funds—or certainly not to the point where a few million pounds either way will make any difference for the sake of getting a good response.

The second is that the TSB has grown by concentrating on providing banking services to the less well-off, and it has been axiomatic since the flotation was first proposed that such people should be represented among its shareholders.

The danger is that the less well-off tend to be inexperienced as investors and may well be



lured by the publicity surrounding the TSB flotation to break the golden rule of equity investment: never to invest more than you can afford to lose.

For example, the hypebolism over the marketing and the general air of enthusiasm over the issue in the City should not be allowed to disguise the fact that at least one respected banking analyst has called the TSB

a dull little company with an uninspiring record.

Further, an outrageously big premium would bring howls of protest about the bank's assets being given away and could reflect badly on the TSB's judgment.

Armageddon, political crises and stock market crashes permitting, however, the TSB looks as sound a bet as you will ever find among new issues.

The biggest problem will be that with so many people chasing the shares, the vast majority will receive either none at all or so few that the profits on selling them might barely cover dealing costs. All things considered, Margate may yet prove more affordable than Marbella.

John Edwards with a guide on how best to put your money into gold and platinum

Heavily into metals

GOLD and platinum prices have been surging ahead, as forecasted in the Weekend FT two weeks ago. But how does the private investor get in on the act?

The answer, to a large extent, depends on whether you are interested in a short-term "punt" and how much, if any, risk capital you have available.

The case for long-term investment in precious metals, as a protection against inflation, currency changes or collapse of the world monetary system, is obviously unaffected by short-term fluctuations, unless you believe that the recent upsurge means the markets are set to move to a permanently higher plateau.

There are several short-term alternatives you can choose between:

- Shares of mining companies producing the metals;
- Unit trusts investing in these shares or offshore funds buying the actual metals or futures;
- Coins, ingots, bars (or "paper" certificates);
- Futures or options;
- Betting, via IG Index or City Index, on price movements.

Share certificates are tangible assets that can be held for a longer period if the short-term gain fails to materialise.

The disadvantages are that one of the prime reasons for the rise in gold and platinum prices is that problems are expected to hit the main mining companies in South Africa. So while the metal price might be rising you could be investing in a company with problems.

Unit trusts and offshore funds are essentially long-term investments which depend on the quality of the fund management. Since you have to pay the higher offer price to acquire units, you face an immediate loss that might take some time to recoup unless the market continues to rise strongly upwards.

Coins, bars and ingots present a problem for UK investors because they are subject to value added tax of 15 per cent—a distinct disincentive. There are legitimate ways round pay-

ing the tax using schemes whereby the coins or bars are bought on your behalf and stored overseas in such centres as the Channel Islands, Luxembourg and Switzerland.

It is important in these cases to have a valid certificate of ownership showing that the coins or bars have actually been purchased and stored under your name. So it is best to deal with reputable companies like Charterhouse and Standard Chartered in the case of gold, or Ayrton Metals and Johnson Matthey for platinum.

Alternatively Citibank have an international "certificate programme" under which you can decide how much you want to spend on gold or silver in your local currency (with a minimum equivalent of £1,000). The bank collects all the orders received daily and makes a purchase at the going market rate, which is then divided up amongst the contributors. You receive a certificate stating how much you have been allocated.

You can either take delivery or leave it in storage at the point of purchase. There are no storage fees for the first year; thereafter 0.75 per cent of the value is charged. The bank takes 3 per cent commission for the purchase and a further 1 per cent if you decide to take delivery or sell.

The advantages of the scheme is that the spread between buy and sell prices is much narrower than if you dealt with the bullion broker. At the same time you can pay by credit card or cheque. Details are available from Citibank in New York at 212-559 6041.

The problem with "paper" purchases, however, is that they do not satisfy one basic reason for buying precious metals—being able to hold in your hands a tangible asset that can be freely traded virtually anywhere even in times of crisis.

If you don't mind paying the VAT, you can get a variety of gold coins ranging from Mapleleaves and Kruggerands from a wide network of sellers throughout the country, including most branches of the clearing banks and coin dealers, like Spinks.

Gamble on gold

NOTHING brings punters out of the woodwork more than a good old-fashioned surge in the price of gold. If you would rather just have a tax-free flutter than sink your money into the real thing, there are specialised bookmakers who do the bill.

The most buccaneering among them is City Index, which offers the simple chance to bet on the gold bullion price in a month's time—although you can take your profits or cut your losses before the month is up. You bet on the direction—up or down—and your gains or losses depend on the extent to which the price rises or falls.

The minimum bet is £10 a "point", and each point is a movement of one dollar in the gold price. The bookmaker's secret is that the reference price is not the actual gold price at the time of making the bet but the level of the bookmaker's three-point "spread".

On Thursday, for example, City Index was quoting a spread of 384/387 when the actual price was at \$384.10 per ounce. The punter making an up bet would not start to show a profit until the price went over 387. Similarly, a down-better would not be in the money unless the price dipped below 384.

Many City Index customers are City people, such as commodity brokers wanting a tax-free punt on the side. City Index seeks credit references but requires no money down until the month is up, making for some

naïf-biting moments. Christopher Hales, one of its founders, says the company rarely hedges its own exposure. "I take the view that the whole of life is six to four against, and don't hedge."

IG Index, which is about to absorb the third member of the industry, Ladbroke Index, takes a far more structured approach. It offers a broader range of bets based not only on the bullion price but also on US gold futures and options contracts, and its spread is based more on formulas than on feel.

Its contracts are structured to be as similar as possible to actual trading on futures and options markets, with the difference that you deal at the price they quote, not the best price at which your broker can execute on a trading floor in New York.

IG Index even offers a service called controlled risk, which is akin to stop-loss orders on futures markets triggered automatically when the market reaches a given level.

The minimum bet on the bullion price is \$10 a point, and the minimum for gold futures and options bets is \$40 a point. For platinum futures bets, the minimum is \$20 a point. IG Index requires up-front money similar to margin payments on futures markets. This must be especially necessary for options, which can see violent price swings.

Alex Nicoll

A plethora of home lenders

There are more than 200 sources of home loans. John Edwards writes that you should shop around widely

CONFUSION ABOUNDS in the mortgage market. The past week has seen BankAmerica deciding to restrict its home loans lending by raising the minimum amount it is prepared to advance and scrapping the 100 per cent of value mortgages. There have also been reports of some major building societies having to delay, or impose quotas on mortgage applications.

At the same time efforts to promote and sell mortgages, drawing on an apparently inexhaustible flow of funds continue unabated. The Mortgage Corporation, for example, stepped up its advertising campaign following a cut in its lending rate to a competitive level of 10.25 per cent aimed at boosting sluggish demand. Meanwhile all kinds of different organisations are offering various incentives to woo mortgage business from home-owners.

Each week new sources of mortgage funds, usually offered at competitive rates, are announced and choosing a mortgage now is a highly complicated business if you take the experts' advice to shop around for the deal that suits your needs most.

Although building societies promised to lend a record £1bn in mortgages to home buyers in June, and accounted for 88.7 per cent of the total UK mortgage market in the first quarter of the year, all the signs are that the building societies are under tremendous pressure from competitive lenders, led by the clearing banks but joined by an increasing number of other financial institutions.

Mortgage specialist brokers John Charcol reckons that in addition to the 160 or so building societies offering mortgages there are at least 60 other sources of home loans available. Faced with this range of choice, how do you set about finding the best mortgage for you?

The first step is to clarify exactly what you really want to achieve. As insurance brokers Towry Law point out, there should be no difficulty in borrowing the money; the real question is the means of repayment. The purist approach is that you are seeking a long-term loan, offering your house as collateral. How you pay back the loan is really your business, since the lender is well protected with collateral that normally far exceeds the value of the loan.

Unfortunately most lenders, particularly building societies, do not view mortgages in that way and insist on additional security. At the same time mortgage rates are not strictly comparable in many cases since the way they are calculated can make a considerable difference. The most obvious example is that building societies calculate their nominal interest rates generally on an annual basis, while most of the banks and financial institutions use a daily or monthly reducing balance method.

The annual basis is more expensive since you pay interest on the whole amount outstanding at the beginning of the year, instead of a reducing amount throughout the year. It makes quite a difference. The APR (annual percentage rate) introduced by the government was supposed to help provide the public with a true comparison, but unfortunately it has failed to do so, since the APR also varies with the length of the mortgage and with what charges are built in.

Basically the building society rates are uncompetitive with their rivals, but they have the advantage of an established track record in mortgage lending. There is still a strong feeling that when the situation changes, and money becomes less plentiful, newcomers to the market will pull out and penalise their existing borrowers with high rates.

With so many choices available in a buyers' market it makes good sense to shop around rather than simply go to your local building society or bank. To save time and energy, one obvious answer is to seek advice from a specialist mortgage or investment broker, who in theory should be able to view all the alternatives available.

But many brokers are linked to particular companies, either directly or indirectly through commission deals, so it is worth consulting several sources before making up your mind.

Cheques check

ANYTHING YOU can do to reduce danger of theft or fraud these days is to be welcomed. A crossed cheque gives some protection against a thief, because the two parallel lines instruct the bank not to cash it, but the significance of adding the words "not negotiable" between the crossing is not always appreciated. Without these words, a cheque could become liable if the cheque is stolen.

Naturally, you will instruct your bank to stop payment of a cheque immediately you realise that it has gone astray, but there is a chance that an unlawful holder will have already forged an endorsement and persuaded an innocent party to accept it. Endorsed, it can be paid into a bank account. However, when it arrives at your bank for payment it will be returned marked "orders not to pay" and the account of the innocent party debited.

Although his redress is firstly against the forger it is unlikely that he will be able to trace him. If he left an address it will be a false one. The claim is therefore against you. Most companies now cross their cheques in this way and

request you to do so when paying their accounts or subscribing for shares. There is no harm in making general use of these words. The cheque is still transferable, but in legal terms a person taking it "shall not have, and shall not be capable of giving, a better title to it than that which the person from whom he took it had."

Sometimes you are asked to add the words "account payee" to an account "John Bull and Co." This gives further protection because if the bank accepts the cheque for an account other than that stated and conversion has occurred it could be held liable for negligence.

The words "and Co." often associated with a crossing arose years ago when it was the practice to write these words as part of the title of a firm or a bank leaving the payee to insert the remainder of the name. By themselves the words are meaningless.

The payee or holder of a cheque is entitled to cross it "not negotiable" if the drawer has not already done so, but he cannot cancel a crossing.

Harold Baldwin

High society drawbacks

BUILDING society chequebook accounts are not all they are cracked up to be—largely because of the restraints imposed upon them by law. That is the view of Building Society Choice, the monthly specialist publication.

Unlike most banks, societies pay interest on their current chequebook accounts. However, much of the interest you earn over the year could be wiped out by the charges most societies impose even if your account is in credit.

All the major banks recently stopped charging customers for their transactions as long as they stay in credit, but among the societies only the Abbey National's Cheque-Save and Birmingham Midshires Mastercheque make no charges.

In its latest issue, Choice points out that society cheque accounts are still suffering from the restraints imposed upon them by law. The main drawback is that societies cannot give you a cheque guarantee card, nor can they extend overdrafts. Until new legislation comes into force next year, the

only way societies can get around this is by link-ups with banks, which allows them to provide full banking facilities.

Two societies offer such accounts—the Alliance and Leicester with the Bank of Scotland, and the Birmingham and Midshires with the Trustee Savings Bank. Both operate in a similar way. You have a normal bank cheque account but most of your money stays in a society account where it earns interest. Whenever your bank account runs low, it is automatically topped up from your society.

However, as the accompanying table shows, in both cases you have to maintain fairly large balances on your bank account—on which you will not earn interest. Choice says that if, as a result, your balance in the society account was reduced to an average £100, you would make only £6 a year despite earning interest. With the Alliance and Leicester, you will also pay charges on your transactions unless you have enough in your society account to top up your Bank of Scotland account to £350.

Until societies can extend overdrafts each time you overdraw on your society chequebook account, your cheque will be returned unpaid. And each time this happens the Abbey National, for instance, will charge you £6.00. In the case of the bank-linked accounts, you will pay the prevailing bank overdraft charges.

A further drawback is that societies do not yet have an extensive ATM network for cash withdrawals, although this problem will diminish as their own Matrix network expands and the Link network, in which some societies participate along with other financial institutions, becomes fully operational.

Building society chequebook accounts are at their most attractive if you have large sums to deposit in them. For example, a balance of £2,000 could make you £100 a year with the Abbey National and £150 with the Chelsea. But these returns compare unfavourably with the returns you can earn from society higher interest accounts.

Margaret Hughes

BUILDING SOCIETY CHEQUE BOOK ACCOUNTS

| | Min. investment | Charges | Standing orders | Direct debits | Cash cards | Interest CAR |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Abbey National Cheque-Save | 100 | Free if in credit 25 p a cheque if overdrawn, no charge for stopping a cheque | None | None | Link | 4.55-7.90 |
| Alliance and Leicester BankSave Plus | 500 | 25p a debit for whole of month bank balance can be topped up to £350. £1 for stopping a cheque | 2 | Unlimited | Matrix from autumn | 6.00-7.50 |
| Birmingham Midshires Mastercheque | 500 | Free if in credit 27p a debit, plus £2.75 charge, plus interest charge for whole of quarter account overdrawn no set charge for stopping a cheque | Unlimited | Unlimited | None | 7.50-8.20 |
| Chelsea Capital Shares | 1,000 | Free for first 50 cheques a year, then 50p a cheque, 75p a cheque if overdrawn, 75p for stopping a cheque | None | None | Link | 6.00-7.50 |
| Peterborough Cash Counter | 100 | Free if balance above £250, £1 a cheque below £250, 25 p a cheque if overdrawn, £2 for stopping a cheque | 10 | None | Link | 4.30-7.04 |
| Town and Country Moneywise | 250 | Free if balance above £250, 50p a cheque below £250, 75p a cheque if overdrawn, 75p for stopping a cheque | 5 | None | Link | 4.00-6.00 |

Source: Building Society Choice.

Widow's labyrinth

My earnings are taxed under Schedule D case II. Until my husband's death in December 1984, we were taxed together. For tax assessment 1984/85, my earnings for 1983/84 (preceding year basis) were apportioned into periods April-December 1984 and December 1984-April 1985. I have now received Schedule D assessment for 1985/86. This is based only on the amount I earned after my husband's death till April 1985 and ignores earnings for the period April-December 1984 which I declared on the return I filed in as my husband's executor. I have not been able to ascertain the legal position. Assuming that the tax office has made a mistake and should have demanded more tax, can I ask it to treat the period April-December 1984 as last year of self-employment, and December 1984-April 1985 as first year of new self-employment? Then my tax liability would be April-December 1984: tax on actual amount earned in that period December 1984-April

1985: tax on actual amount earned in that period 1985/86: tax on amount earned in the period December 1984-April 1985. Such treatment would be of a considerable advantage to me. If you were in partnership with your husband, then his death would trigger the cessation rules of case II. If not, then possibly concession A20 may help you: ask your tax office for the free booklet of extra-statutory concessions, IRI (1985). Whatever the fact, it certainly looks as though your tax inspector has got lost in the labyrinthine rules of schedule D case II. It is to be hoped that those MPs who approved the 265-page Finance Act this year will spend part of their long recess studying it, to see whether any of its provisions might be simplified, for the benefit of the taxpayer and tax inspector alike. Tax officers are human, and the majority of them appear to find the tax laws of recent years as baffling as many of the brightest taxpayers do. Perhaps some MPs forget

that their innate skill in interpreting intricate formulae is not shared by many of their constituents who work in tax offices.

A tip for the taxman

I have a field of five acres running down to a river which is tidal so the field gets flooded, to obviate which I am offering the field as a tip for hard rubbish, earth etc to raise its level. When finished raising I must buy top soil to make it arable again. Or I could go to the cost of stripping top soil off before tipping on the field, storing it for some years maybe as the filling is a slow job and then re-spread my own top soil. Either way quite costly operation. But I could sell the top soil before tipping and use the money plus an obvious extra sum needed to buy back and spread it.



As this seems a capital operation: do I have to declare money received for my top soil? If I do I guess I could claim against it the cost of buying it back as it were... an obvious loss but years later. Anxious to obtain the material for tipping I allow most tipping free but occasionally charge the larger builder if tipping substantial amounts of the less desirable builder's rubbish. As a capital venture of raising my land does this have to be declared? I am told that as this is a capital venture, not one of buying and selling the land or a permanent business I can pocket any gains and just suffer any losses later in the fact that my land has now been raised out of the tidal. If I sold the top soil for example it is really a sale of capital item I suppose but even so spread over the years I guess the net results of costs and income probably are an overall loss financially, but even if a gain

well within the annual allowances for capital gains if spread over the years. We take it that you are not a farmer. That being so, the likely answers are (a) yes, (b) no and (c) yes; that is to say the receipts are in the nature of income, but the later expenditure is of a capital nature.

Two-acre problem

My wife and I have purchased some land near to our sole residence—it is, however, by no means adjacent. The land is adjacent to, but outside, the local authority housing framework boundary. Nevertheless, about two acres of the total area has road frontage and may in the fullness of time be considered appropriate for development. Based on current acceptable densities, such an area would be developed to provide about 15 dwellings. Could you please advise on any steps it would be appropriate to take at this stage to maximise any potential gain and minimise any liability to CGT. Is there any danger that the Revenue would treat this in the nature of trade and thus endeavour to

tax the gain to income tax? What steps can be taken, therefore, to underline that this is a capital investment? You are vulnerable to assessment to income tax under section 489 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970. As subscription 2 says, "This section applies wherever... land... is acquired with the... main object of realising a gain from disposing of the land... and any gain of a capital nature is obtained from the disposal of the land... and this subsection applies whether any... person obtains the gain for himself or for any other person." The amount of tax at stake surely justifies the expense of seeking local professional guidance through the tax minefield: the solicitor who acted for you in the purchase will be able either to help you or to recommend a suitable local firm.

Just oil and water

At an auction recently my wife secured a watercolour for £175. On examining it afterwards she found that it was backed by an oil painting which has been valued at £5,000/£4,000.

She is worried that she may be under an obligation to return this painting to the estate of a woman who died intestate, her effects being sold at this auction. If the property was sold "as viewed" your wife is under no obligation in law to return it. There is clearly a moral obligation to advise the seller, since she may have a remedy against the auctioneer.

Left at the gable end

Last November I contacted a roofing firm to replace a fascia board at my gable end. On inspection they agreed to do the job, and I received their quotation for the work to be done at the end of November. This was not carried out and, after a number of phone calls, a visit was also made. Two men arrived in January with the board in question, plus eight metal trusses, and three thick boards as a platform. They then left for another job, the work being disregarded. After five months, with phone calls not being of any material benefit, I would now be obliged if you can give me guidance as to what my modus operandi

should be under the circumstances. What can I do about the board which I painted and saved them the work? What do I do about the trusses and platform, which has the appearance of having been dumped? Is this not a case of breach of contract? On the other hand, I have no proof that they intend to do the job at all.

There is clearly a breach of contract. Your only course seems to be to procure someone else to fix the board for you. Should the job cost more than the estimate you were given in November you have a claim for the excess cost against the firm with which you contracted—but it seems clear that this would be worthless. As the job now required to be done however is fixing only, you may avoid making a greater outlay than you had envisaged in November. You should advise the firm to remove its trusses failing which you will dispose of them to defray storage costs to date, and allow a reasonable time before you do so.

No legal responsibility can be accepted by Financial Times for the answers given in these columns. All inquiries will be answered by post as soon as possible.

Understanding Reports and Accounts

Jane Allan continues her analysis of Marks and Spencer's 1986 annual report

READING THE balance sheet in the 1986 Marks and Spencer annual report and accounts not only answers some of the questions raised in the chairman's statement, but also provides points to look for in the 1987 accounts. It is the consolidated balance sheet you need to read, however in the case of Marks and Spencer the holding company balance sheet is also interesting. Unlike many quoted companies who's holding company merely exists as the vehicle of ownership for the group, the holding company of Marks and Spencer is the main trading arm in the UK. The balance sheet is divided into two halves; where the financing has been placed and where it has been raised from. Taking the bottom half of the balance sheet first you find that the total capital employed in Marks and Spencer of £14,629m has been raised either directly from shareholders or out of past trading by the company. Called up share capital amounts to £662.7m and the reserves to £793.7m. The reserves are substantially made up of profit earned in earlier years and ploughed back into the company. Although the policy of providing only two times dividend cover has resulted in a higher proportion of profit paid out to shareholders than other companies might be prepared to fund, reserves have still built up to a substantial level. Reserves of £84m have arisen from the revaluation of fixed assets. This refers us back to the note in the accounting policies which advised us that the company had modified its interpretation of the application of the historic cost basis to include the revaluation of certain properties. Once revalued these properties are stated in the balance sheet at the higher for lower figure. The difference between the revalued property and its original cost price (or earlier valuation) is taken to a special reserve called the revaluation reserve. These profits on revaluation have not as such been realised and indeed may never be so unless the company decides to sell off some of the previously revalued properties. Reserves of £5.5m are shown in a special reserve called the share premium account. This takes account of the premium paid for shares issued by the company at more than their face

Look forward to 1987

or nominal value. One of the few reserves controlled by company law, it cannot be used to pay dividends, but is often used to pay for unissued shares which are later issued as scrip issues. Marks and Spencer made just such a scrip issue in July 1984. The amount stated as total capital employed, and required to be stated as such by company law, is not the final figure for capital employed in Marks and Spencer. The chairman in his statement spoke of borrowings and you already know from earlier consideration of the source and application of funds statement that the company has loans and overdrafts. These also need to be considered as part of the funding of the company for purposes of analysing the contribution the company is making from its capital employed. The amounts concerned are listed in two places on the balance sheet; under creditors falling due within one year and under creditors falling due after more than one year. In both instances the notes need to be read to make sure that only the real loan element is treated as capital employed in Marks and Spencer. Creditors falling due within one year shows bank loans and overdrafts of £35.6m, the other £44.6m of current creditors are all trading items of one sort or another and not treated as borrowing. Creditors falling due after one year shows £44.1m of debenture and bank and other loans. Thus the total borrowed capital in Marks and Spencer amounts to £81.7m, making total capital employed plus borrowed capital of £13,544.6m. That capital employed has generated trading profits (profit before interest charges and tax) of £376.9m which gives a return on capital employed of 2.44 per cent (376.9/15446.2 x 100), compared with last year's return of 2.15 per cent. Marks and Spencer are certainly getting more for their money. In some companies it may be significant to work out the return on capital employed in trading as opposed to the capital employed. The capital which is invested outside the group is not employed in trading and as such is not under the control of the board of directors. To include these figures may distort the calculation. A very unprofitable company may be boosting its return on capital employed by investing substantial sums in other organisations. Marks and Spencer has £75.7m invested outside the group in government securities and certificates of tax deposit. Those investments give a return of £9.5m.



LORD RAYNER Chairman of M and S

Thus a return on capital employed in trading would give a figure of 2.5 per cent (376.9/15446.2 x 100). Perhaps more useful still is the calculation that shows the amount of turnover generated per £1 of capital employed. Turnover of £3,734.8m has been generated by capital employed in trading of £1,468.9m, which shows that £2.54 of turnover has been generated by every £1 employed in trading, compared with last year's figures of £2.34. A rising ratio indicates an improvement in performance. One other piece of information is now at your fingertips, the gearing ratio of Marks and Spencer. This can be expressed either as a debt: equity ratio, or as the percentage of capital employed represented by borrowings. The debt: equity ratio is £81.7m:£1,468.9m or 1:1.8. The percentage of capital employed represented by borrowings is 5.3 per cent. Looked at either way Marks and Spencer is a lowly geared company, and as such will face no problems in funding the proposed high future capital expenditure and borrowing to meet its commitments in the next two years as detailed in the chairman's statement. Turning to the top half of the balance sheet we find that £1,461.9m of the capital employed in Marks and Spencer is tied in fixed assets, substantially in land and buildings. A further £510.5m is tied up in current assets of which £255.3m is in stocks and £81m in debtors. The debtors for the charge card are shown in the net financial assets and amount to

£184.45m. Trade creditors amount to £107.5m with total creditors due within a year of £481.7m in the retail section and £145m in the financial services.

Thus Marks and Spencer has total assets of £510.5m in the retail sector and £191.3m in the financial activities making total assets of £701.8m. Liabilities of £481.7m in the retail sector and £145m in the financial activities make total liabilities of £626.7m, giving a ratio of 1.2 (assets:liabilities). Taking the stock out of the calculation on the grounds that stocks take time to turn into cash the quick ratio shows 0.74. This is not a dramatic problem, but rather the norm for a company that is trading successfully. However, it can be said to indicate a market for its stocks in forth coming years. The source and application of funds statement shows us that Marks and Spencer began the year with £101.1m cash and short-term funds. Trading has generated funds of £424m (profit before tax plus the depreciation because that has not resulted in outward cash flow) plus the proceeds from sales of fixed assets. Selling shares has generated further funds of £6.9m. Nearly £163m has been spent on fixed assets and a further £215.7m has been spent in taxes, dividends and other miscellaneous expenditure, leaving a further investment in working capital of £16.6m. Not all of the £16.6m invested in working capital has been raised out of the sources of funds: £34.6m has come as a result of higher creditors, possibly as a result of slower payment. At the end of the year however, Marks and Spencer has turned £101.1m into £136.7m in cash and short term funds. The money waiting to be invested in both the capital commitments for the next two years and the increased working capital needed to enhance turnover. Finally the notes to the accounts give us details of capital commitments of £400.8m and contingent liabilities of £126.9m. The contingent liabilities are very unlikely to become liabilities; they are mere notes to the accounts indicating, for example, that if guarantees Marks and Spencer had given on behalf of third parties were all called in £9.3m would be payable and that £117.4m of deferred taxation has not been provided for. All in all a good set of accounts. They certainly are investing in progress, and with all their own work too. We are left with the following questions for 1987 though: ● When will it become necessary to borrow and how will that affect the gearing of Marks and Spencer? ● Will the return in turnover continue and can it be improved further? ● Will the new developments on the charge card referred to in the chairman's statement lead to tighter controls and hence profit in the financial activities sector?

Protecting outside interests

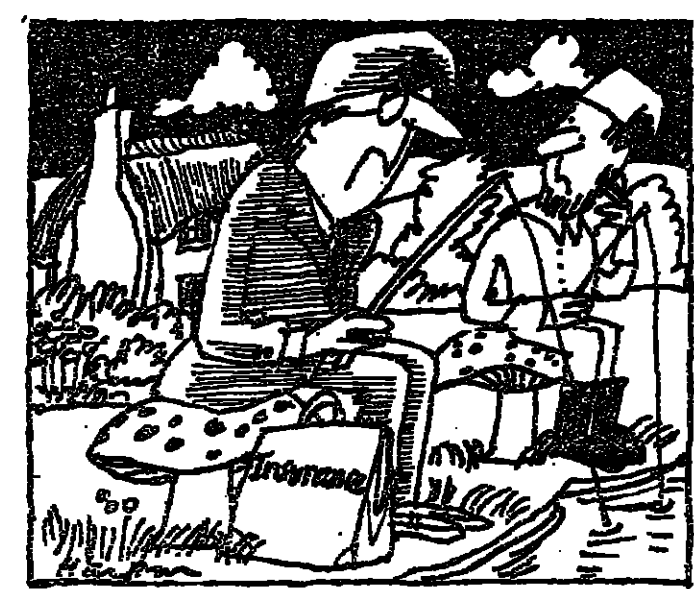
Your garden gnomes may be as much at risk as the family silver, warns Eric Short

OVER THE past few years, insurance companies have been redesigning their household contracts for both buildings and contents to make the cover more comprehensive. There is now little reason to worry about the financial consequences if your roof blows off or thieves take the family silver. However, many companies do not appear to have looked into a householder's insurance needs outside the actual home in his garden, in his gates and fences. A recent report from the consumer magazine Which? reinforced by our own straw poll of leading insurance companies, shows a wide disparity in cover provided in such cases. This oversight seems unexplainable given the rising cost of gardening these days. The smallest petrol-driven lawn mower will cost well over £200 while ride-on mowers may well be more than £1,000. Most house insurance contracts include outbuildings such as greenhouses, garden sheds and conservatories in the cover as these are usually regarded as part of the main buildings even though, for the most part, they are physically separate. This cover includes the more "permanent" of the contents of these buildings—the mower, ladders, garden tools and so on—although it would be advisable to tell the insurance company of any particularly valuable items.

However, theft cover would be provided under many policies only if there was forcible and violent entry. Many householders do not bother to lock their sheds, either through laziness, thoughtlessness or because the door post is so rotten that the lock would not keep out a cat, let alone a determined thief. In order to claim on your insurance policy, you must at least keep the shed locked at night. This applies particularly to greenhouses even though it can be inconvenient to continually lock and unlock the door. So, do not keep valuable tools in the greenhouse. It is a difficult story if the tools are outside in the garden and they are stolen or damaged by weather. Cover here is either

non-existent or limited to a maximum at around £100 (although one leading insurer is prepared to meet claims for as much as £500 overall on items left in the open but still on the premises). The position if the items are off the premises is very unclear, so do not leave the trimmer when doing the outside of your hedge. At least one leading company would regard this event as being covered under the insurance. Plants in the greenhouse may be covered under normal contents insurance against theft or storm damage but not against failure in the heating system—a feature of some importance for the person whose hobby is

growing exotic blooms. However once outside, cover ceases for damage or theft to any type of plant—and some rare trees can be expensive to replace. Companies do have special policies for market gardeners, though. Garden ornaments, such as concrete gnomes are not covered against theft or storm damage, but usually against vandalism and malicious damage. Yet, a walk around most garden centres will soon reveal that ornaments like statuary or pots can be very expensive. Swimming pools are usually treated as part of the main house buildings but garden pools are rarely mentioned, even though these could be stocked with costly fish. Finally, there is the contentious subject of cover for gates, fences and walls surrounding a garden. Practice among insurers varies considerably, particularly for storm damage, frost and snow damage, and subsidence. Some insurance contracts will cover these perils, but others decline on the ground that householders tend not to maintain the gates, fences and walls as they do the main house buildings. The companies claim that fences and walls are usually in such a dilapidated condition that a puff of wind will blow them down. Walls, fences and gates are covered against theft, though, which is not as ridiculous as it might sound. These days, robbers are taking anything that can be moved and the cost of fence panelling makes such burglaries worth while.



When trust isn't enough

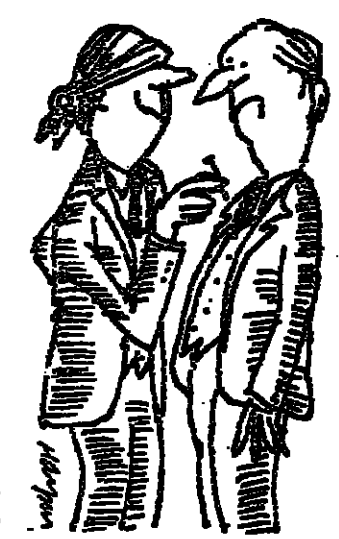
Alan Kelly tells how investors can assess a fund manager's skill

HOW IMPORTANT is a unit trust manager to the private investor? With the large majority of fund managers having virtually a free hand in picking stocks, subject only to the overall policy of the management company, the importance of the unit trust manager cannot be overstated. Because decisions these days have to be made without delay, gone are the days for most unit trusts when investment management was made by "committee". So how can you form a considered opinion as to which managers offer above-average expertise? Probably the most relevant test is to see the results produced in the past. Many publications provide regular statistics showing how the unit trusts have performed over periods ranging from a month to ten years.

But as many investors have experienced to their cost, a satisfactory past performance does not guarantee that a fund will necessarily do well in the future. Results should be considered over a reasonable period, say three years. It is important to remember that if there has been a change in the fund manager, the new manager will not be solely responsible for those results. When you look at the past performance of a unit trust, the results should be compared with similar funds and also with relevant indices. The statistics shown in the press are often divided into geographical and industrial sectors so that comparisons can be made. The monthly magazine, Money Management, uses the same classification as that operated by the Unit Trust Association. Apart from the results of a particular unit trust itself, it is preferable for the parent management company to have a good all-round performance record. This will often demonstrate the resources of the fund and the "back-up" facilities available to the manager. In addition to looking at the best performance of a unit trust, you can gain an extra

insight by reading appropriate publications, the financial press and literature produced by the management company itself, especially the half-yearly unit trust managers' report. From this information, you can often find out the investment philosophy of the fund manager in such matters as to whether he runs a concentrated portfolio or prefers the unit trust to have a larger number of stocks; whether he is an active dealer or makes relatively

tively few managers have had wide experience of investing in Europe. At meetings with fund managers finding out the means by which they obtain their information is important and whether there is adequate cover when they are on holiday. Do they spend an excessive amount of time on non-investment matters such as marketing? If they do decide to have a professional adviser, great care should be taken in the actual choice. Frequently, the best way of reaching a decision will be by recommendation followed by a discussion with the adviser to find out the way he operates and the approach he uses in the selection of unit trusts. * Alan Kelly is author of the book "Financial Planning for the Individual," published by Financial Times Business Information.



Don't step out of the covenant

Donald Eklitz looks at the problems of a favourite way of saving tax

FOR THOSE in the know, Deeds of Covenant have been a favourite means of saving tax for many years, but their current popularity is a relatively new phenomenon. Furthermore, for the time being at any rate, they look set to avoid the attentions both of a judiciary determined to curb tax avoidance and a Treasury which counts the cost of every tax relief. Indeed, the authorities actually seem to be encouraging their use, as witness the Student Tax Information Pack which is, fundamentally, a do-it-yourself Deed of Covenant kit. Covenants are certainly a highly efficient means of making regular gifts, a payment by you of £1,633 a year to your 18-year-old student son being increased by the tax refund which he can claim to £2,335 a year. But increasing familiarity should not be allowed to

obscure the fact that the law underlying Deeds of Covenant is complex and demands respect. If you step outside the rules, the Inland Revenue will certainly pounce. The sums covenanted must actually be paid and you must be ready to provide evidence of the fact. A statement that your student son receives an equivalent benefit in the form of bed and board during the vacations will not be received with favour. Undoubtedly, though, the principal requirement of a Deed if it is to achieve the sought-for tax benefits is that it must be for a period capable of exceeding six years (three years for charity Deeds). But the fact that the payments might actually cease sooner than that because the covenantor dies, or because the parties so agree, will not contravene the rule. What you and your advisers must keep firmly in mind is that it is the period between the due date of the first payment (which must not be before the Deed is executed) and the last payment which must be capable of exceeding six years, regardless of the period which the Deed is said to cover.

Consider the following example. A Deed of Covenant which recites that it is for a period of seven years from April 6, 1986 is executed on May 1, 1986, the first payment being due immediately and subsequent payments on April 6 each year. Seven years from April 6 1986 is April 5 1993, so the last payment will be April 6 1992 (being the last April 6 in this period). Consequently, less than six years will elapse between the first (May 1 1986) and last (April 6 1992) payments and the claim for tax relief will fail. Furthermore, various court cases around 1940 established the rule that the series of payments must have a constant element binding them together in a sequence, the whole exceeding six years. There is evidence that the Revenue are taking the view that the common device of covenanting to children an amount increasing in line with the single person's tax allowance, falls foul of this rule. Only the lowest amount, it is claimed, represents a payment capable of exceeding six years and as the excess amounts do

not do so, no tax relief is due in respect of them. Certain UK non-residents with taxable income in Britain (Crown Servants whose salaries remain fully taxable are a good example) look to be well placed to achieve very substantial benefits by means of Deeds of Covenant. For one thing, wives often remain UK residents. Another, non-residents have the distinction of being entitled to tax benefits in respect of Covenants in favour of their own minor unmarried children. Thus the way is open for the non-resident who is entitled to no tax relief to transfer UK income to his wife and children who have. But the Revenue do not see it that way, the view being taken that, prima facie, payments under a Deed made by a non-resident are a charge on his overseas income and are, therefore, not available for British tax relief. Even if this difficulty is overcome, relief may still be refused on the ground that the payments are merely in furtherance of the husband's legal responsibility to maintain his wife and children. Nevertheless, opportunities to benefit from this situation remain.

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A Selective Estates/Boh Chick Development

HARRODS NO longer provides a haven for dispossessed furniture. But as the most famous of the household stores becomes a memory, hundreds of lock-up garages and warehouses across Britain are being drafted into service to satisfy a growing national demand for somewhere to park the home contents.

Harrods' great riverside depositories, stars for a few minutes each spring as they loom into view in the television coverage of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, have been empty for some years. "It was very popular when people went abroad to live and used to be able to let their homes unfurnished," explains Mrs Close of Harrods. But, as she says, air travel has also brought to an end the days when Harrods' customers would board a Cunard liner for an extensive trip and be out of town for months at a stretch. "Now it is so much quicker for them to get back there is less reason to put furniture into store."

You can't head for Knightsbridge with your removal van any more, but otherwise the choice of storage options is growing ever wider. Mr Colin Quarrington of the British Association of Removers (BAR) says: "Storage is a very buoyant part of the business at the moment, and in many cases it is supporting the vehicle side of removals."

"Lots of people are posted abroad and need to put their house contents away for a time. A lot of people trading down to a smaller house want to keep furniture for the sake of their children... people store an amazing variety of things for all sorts of reasons, and it is something of a boom time for storage at the moment with more people coming into the business all the time."

A call to the association (01-377 3088) will get you a list of three member firms with storage facilities in your area. From there it is a matter of seeing what types of storage are available locally, and how much it costs. There are no national averages because, as Mr Quarrington says, "the price of storage space in Surrey is clearly going to be greater than in, say, Greater Manchester. But there is so much competition that prices in an area tend to be very similar. Storage costs are more than on a par than removals costs, where the difference in charges can be quite wide."

John Brennan looks at insurance for stored goods

Problems with vermin



Parking lot: Darryl Sutherland of Nationwide Self Storage.

According to Pickfords (01-367 0045) the costs of packing away the contents of the average semi-detached house would range from £15 to £20 a week. They vary according to where you live and whether the storage is in the traditional loose warehouse packaging form or containerised.

Pickfords' "home packs" are their version of the special household containers that were introduced to Britain from the US some 20 years ago. Goods are packed as for a move, and stored away in a container that is sealed in front of you. That resolves the problem of disputes about goods getting "misplaced" between home and store, one that can create a lot of friction.

Over at Bishops & Son Depositories (01-821 8151) Mr David Barnes charges £30 a week for 1,000 cubic ft of stored property and an extra £2 a week for every extra 100 cubic ft. That includes VAT at 15 per cent and 8 per cent covering insurance while the goods are in store.

Insurance cover for stored goods isn't as straightforward as it seems. Quite often a normal household contents policy will cover, or be able to extend to goods stored in a secure warehouse while you're in the middle of a house move, or having to put away the furniture for a time for whatever reason. But,

Some storage groups will bring a container back to your home so that you can take out the things you need. But that runs up all the transport and handling charges of a special shuttle through the warehouse and van trip each time.

Just as the Americans brought us containerised household storage, so an idea that first found form in Phoenix, Arizona, is now available in Britain and could well transform the storage business.

As the BAR's Mr Quarrington says: "Do-it-yourself storage is just a pinprick in the market at the moment, but it has been extremely successful in the US and elsewhere." The man who did that pinprick was one of the Royal Household of Kensington and Chelsea's underground car parks beneath the World's End estate, is Mr Colin Baker.

Mr Baker set up Nationwide Self-Storage just under a year ago, and he's already achieved an 88 per cent occupancy rate in his 30,000 sq ft car park site. Self-Storage, as he explains, means just what it says. You rent out your own personal mini-store. "The great advantages are that you rent only what you need in terms of space, and you have access to your store all the time."

"Once people realise what self-storage is they all say how useful it is. We have little old ladies popping in all the time to look at the things they have in store. We have businessmen who keep their wine cellars here, there are antique dealers who move stock in and out... there is a whole car stored here, in parts. If you have a piece of furniture in store that needs repairing you just come in, get it out and send it off. It is that flexible."

You can rent anything from a 12 ft locker to a 1,000 ft section of Nationwide's store and that means that you can see exactly how much space you do need to pay for, rather than relying on a removal man's estimate of the cubic feet required.

The World's End store, at Ballymore Street, Chelsea (01-351 9300), has individual metal screened areas for store. Like an overgrown safety deposit box, you get the keys, pay the rent by the month and turn up to fill or empty your store as you wish. A 50 sq ft unit, 8 ft high costs £25.50 a month to rent and provides 400 cubic ft of space, enough to pack in the contents of a smallish flat.

"This is new to Britain, but it is big business in the US, in Australia and New Zealand. In New York there is 5 cu ft of self-storage space per person," Mr Baker intends to have a network of 50 self-store centres in the London area alone in the next few years. His second site, in north London, is due to open before the year is out.

Perk up and sell

WHAT DO YOU do if you want to sell a property, but don't want to keep cutting the price. It seems that you could give the negotiator an incentive.

"Our clients are extremely anxious to sell and as an added incentive are offering a bonus of £5,000 to the individual negotiator who is successful in introducing a purchaser who proceeds to successful exchange and completion."

That is, word for word, the content of a paragraph in an SOS (Sell Our Stock) letter sent out to 'all agents' by a London firm trying to clear a £345,000 house. There is also a half share of a 3 per cent commission on offer to the agency that helps to get rid of that particular property. It would be unfair to make this individual agent, since that

kind of negotiator incentive is becoming increasingly common.

A £5,000 cash bonus—which would be as fascinating to the Inland Revenue as to the winning salesman—is rather exceptional. But £500 cheques and free holidays have started to become a regular spur when the normal range of marketing efforts and price cuts have failed to flush out a buyer.

Nicola Tower misses out on the cash and ski trips because, as a negotiator at Knight Frank & Rutley she, like staff at most of the major agencies, wouldn't consider accepting cash in hand from a vendor for a successful sale. "We don't accept them, but a lot of people do around the agencies. If a property has gone stale it gives the negotiator an incentive to push it."

As she explains, informal inter-agency sharing systems come into play if, after a few weeks trying prospective buyers, no-one on a firm's books seems to be showing any interest. At KFR a selected list of fellow agents would be given details of the property and, if they find a buyer among their contacts, the agents would share the commission.

There are quite a few properties doing the inter-agency rounds at the moment because as Ms Tower says: "There are a lot of properties that people are trying to sell at vastly inflated prices." That's a point echoed by many London agents, who entered a slack mid-summer market. A property of hopelessly priced properties.

J.B.

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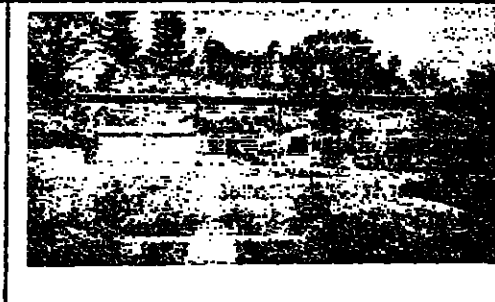
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WIM

London up and down

ROLLERCOASTERS slow as they climb the last few yards before a sickening rush downwards. Price rises in the central areas of London—where the supply of top-of-the-market flats is growing for the first time in years thanks to the efforts of a new generation of specialist residential developers—are also slowing. So are we about to see the long forecast price slide.

The evidence points to a very clear "yes, and no." "Yes" in the exotic inner London residential investment market. "No" if you discount some of the unrealistic asking prices attached to quite a few properties on the market at the moment—for the rest of the capital's more stable owner-occupied stock.

The evidence is largely national, since one has to forget house price surveys in central London there are no reliable statistics on residential property value movements sensitive enough to pick up anything finer than a broad trend up or down. Of the national house price surveys, only that produced by Mr Christopher Gilchrist and his team at the Halifax Building Society works on anything like the spread and weighting of property types needed to be regarded as a reliable guide to price trends in the recent past.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' house price survey is a useful guide to agents' views of prices nationally, and the Institute of Surveyors' Valuers' and Auctioneers' price index tracks a sound, but limited selection of average house prices across the country. They are all interesting, all useful as a rough guide to the state of the market nationally, but quite useless when it comes to the international core of flats and houses in London. That's a distinctive market on its own.

As Victoria Mitchell of Savills says, at the firm's Sloane Street office: "The majority of people we see are not going to live in the properties they buy." They are buyers who, over the past few years, have come to treat the growing stock of high quality rentable flats and houses in Mayfair and Knightsbridge, in Kensington and Chelsea, as an investment. And like any investment that relies more on capital growth rather than coupon to justify its place in a portfolio, it has to be seen as trading stock.

An average 5 per cent return on rental income is not bad, but neither is it especially impressive against international alternatives, particularly as British

starts to move into a pre-election period of uncertainty. Pre-election jitters make the sterling value of the return, and of the property holding itself, look increasingly risky.

Strong capital appreciation would more than compensate for that risk and low basic coupon. But minimal, zero, or negative appreciation—or even the prospect of such a switch in London property's fortunes—would set the "sell" signals flashing. They are flashing now and the signs are that the smart traders are beginning to unload.

Prices won't reflect that for a time. Professional investors start cashing in their profits while the amateurs are still pouring into the market. That sums up the central London investment—held flat market before the summer hiatus.

Long-term holders are a different matter. Properties in and around the core areas of central London that are homes first and only incidentally an investment have been tempted into the investment market—further increasing the supply—as owners try their luck with optimistic asking prices. But if prices do emerge from a period of summer hesitation and start to show signs of declining, those over-occupied properties will simply be taken off the market.

Not so the several hundred £200,000-plus new and newly converted flats coming up for sale this autumn.

The acquisition, financing, and construction timescale of a residential conversion is such

that a lot of high quality refurbished flats, started when prices were showing 30 to 40 per cent increases in central areas, are due on to the London market in the next few months.

A disproportionately large number of those schemes have been designed and priced for sale to investors who wish to hold them for rent and capital growth. But as the sharper traders are moving on, these new-built blocks increase supply just as demand is shifting elsewhere. So they represent another warning sign for prices.

That leaves the question of where, if anywhere, the more fleet-footed traders are looking for their next turn in the residential market. And at least one of the answers lies under wraps at P & O.

The shipping business within Mr Jeffrey Sterling's group owns the King's Reach site in Chelsea, just upriver from World's End. Potentially one of the biggest and best residential development sites in the west end, it would take a stunningly incompetent design to fail to draw in buyers.

Like the riverside warehouse schemes in Docklands (where traders have helped to bankroll developers by buying at a discount off the plans and selling at a profit on the back of the marketing drive on completion), when P & O's 1,000-plus house and flat "Chelsea Harbour" development is unveiled in September it looks certain to attract a queue of off-the-plan buyers.

• Agricultural land values may be depressed enough to have frightened all but the most shrewd buyers away, but £25 an acre (and no one left any sights off that figure) would tempt even the least speculative investor. The land is, of course, for sport rather than farming—in this case, a brace of grouse moors. Savills' West Office (0904 38741) have the South Yorkshire moor of Snailden and Derbyshire's Woodhead Moor for sale for around £150,000 and £125,000 respectively.

Snailden covers 3,965 acres, and the property includes a three-bedroom lodge overlooking Wiscar reservoir, farm buildings, 130 acres of freehold grazing land, and sporting rights over 3,100 acres of moor and 735 acres of woods. Woodhead, being sold jointly with Lancasters of Barnsley, covers 3,555 acres. There is a keeper's cottage, shooting lodge, and 29 acres of freehold land on this Pennine moor that has a 12-year average of 300 brace.

• Even after a price cut from £650,000 to £585,000, a second-floor mansion flat at 79 Northgate, Prince Albert Road, London NWS, (above) shows just how much it costs these



• Even after a price cut from £650,000 to £585,000, a second-floor mansion flat at 79 Northgate, Prince Albert Road, London NWS, (above) shows just how much it costs these

days to find a home with views across Regent's Park. Knight Frank & Rutley (01-624 8171) is selling the large, high-ceilinged, four-bedroom flat on an 83-year lease.



Doldrums in Dublin

MR PETER SUTHERLAND, the Irish EEC Commissioner, sold his two-story house in Blackpool, South Dublin, at auction recently for £132,000 (£124,500).

To anyone looking for a good-sized family home in London, what the buyer got for his money was impressive, or depressing, depending on how you look at it.

Built in 1852, it has five bedrooms, four reception rooms and full modern amenities. Although strictly speaking a terraced house, it is flanked by single-story wings which give it the appearance of detachment and it has one-third of an acre of gardens. All this in a popular area within three miles of the city centre.

For that sort of price that kind of very attractive, spacious house is by no means unusual in Dublin. In fact, although top prices for the most exclusive properties currently range up to about £400,000, there is not much in the Dublin market at present at more than £150,000.

If your price range is in the £250,000 to £300,000 bracket, there is still a good variety of well-located houses available, covering modern suburban bungalows, period terraced houses and later semi-detached properties.

Mr Hugh Hamilton, of estate agent Hamilton and Hamilton, gave the following example of market trends. In the 1960s, his company sold a Georgian mansion on 34 acres in Carrickmines, just outside Dublin, for £250,000. In the mid-1970s it was resold with just 16 acres for £150,000. In 1983, it went for £325,000 and Mr Hamilton estimated it was still worth about that today.

"Ten years ago there was not much of a difference in the middle range between Dublin and London," said Mr Alan Cooke, president of the Irish Auctioneers and Valuers Institute, the country's main organisation of property dealers. "Now we are much more in the doldrums because of the economic problems. The country is in a hock and that has affected confidence in the property market."

Dublin house prices stopped in 1981—as did new building—after a two-stage boom in the early and late 1970s. Exact figures are not available, but estate agents reckon lower priced properties declined in value by as much as 25 per cent. At the upper end, prices slipped upwards, but not in line with inflation. The slump has been long, but estate agents are now more con-

ident of an upturn than they have been for some time. They say higher priced houses have already begun to go up in value.

The mortgage rate has fallen to 8.5 per cent. Favourable external conditions an inflation below 5 per cent have raised the economic beat, with hopes for a rise in disposal income. Incentives such as home improvement grants and mortgage tax relief are also more attractive than before.

Looking ahead, there are expectations that Ireland's domestic personal tax regime may be relaxed, especially with an election due in the next year, and some even cast an eye at the British political scene. "Whenever Labour gets in the UK it always improves the market here," said one auctioneer. There is at least one sign that

Pushing over the £150,000 mark are Victorian and Edwardian semi-detached and terraced houses slightly closer to town, around Herbert Park, in streets such as Wellington Road, Pembroke Park and Clyde Road. Newer townhouses, news and apartments can be found in these areas at much lower prices.

The famous tall Georgian terraces and squares around Merrion Square and St Stephen's Green in the city centre, which date from 1790 to 1830, are now almost all converted to office use, but anyone fancying reconverting one of these houses should give it some thought now. The decline in commercial property values has been such that Georgian houses worth £400,000 a few years ago can sell for as little as half that today.

Elsewhere on the south side, the most popular areas are down the coast following the line of the "Dart" (Dublin Area Rapid Transport) railway, under the stand of the Landsdowne Road international rugby ground, through Sandymount, Monkstown and Blackrock to the port of Dun Laoghaire and beyond.

House buying in Ireland is frequently done through auction at estate agents' premises, especially for upper-market properties where heavy interest is expected. A bidder must arrange finance in advance and the highest bidder has no legal escape from purchase once the hammer has fallen. A deposit, usually of 10 per cent, is due on the auction day and the deal must be closed within six weeks.

Selling costs include, in Dublin, agents' fees of not more than 2.5 per cent plus 25 per cent VAT. For the buyer, stamp duty is 6 per cent over £50,000 and there is an annual property tax on houses worth more than £285,000 of 1.5 per cent. However, there are no domestic rates and home improvement grants can be worth up to £28,000 on pre-1940 houses. First time buyers can get grants for newly built houses of £2,000 plus a mortgage subsidy of £2,000 over five years.

It is incentives like these that the trade is hoping will help move the market this autumn. "We have enough incentives. Really what is missing is confidence," said Mr Mark Fitzgerald, managing partner of estate agents Sherry Fitzgerald and son of Dr Garret Fitzgerald, the Prime Minister.

Until that returns, it is still a buyers' market in Dublin.

Prices have been stagnating but an upturn may be near says Hugh Carnegie

the trade perception of an upturn is shared by buyers. Estate agents report an increase in the numbers of Irish people living abroad looking for properties at home before the market rises.

Expectations of a rise must be tempered, though, by disturbing signs that the economy is not responding as readily to better external conditions as some predicted and by the fact that the pressure on Irish interest rates is once again upwards as the punt is riding high against sterling.

Whatever happens to prices, the geography of house-buying in Dublin is likely to follow long-established patterns. Broadly speaking, the city divides into southside and northside—south of the river Liffey, which is fashionable, and north of the river, which is decidedly unfashionable.

There are notable exceptions to this. Developments around the Phoenix Park in north west Dublin are popular and perhaps the most exclusive of Dublin properties are on the balby peninsula of Howth which juts out cragily into the Irish Sea on the north end of Dublin Bay.

On the southside, the most sought-after houses are in the Ballsbridge area in Ailesbury and Shrewsbury Roads, sometimes described as the Mayfair of Dublin. A Shrewsbury Road house on an acre of land fetched £230,000 recently.

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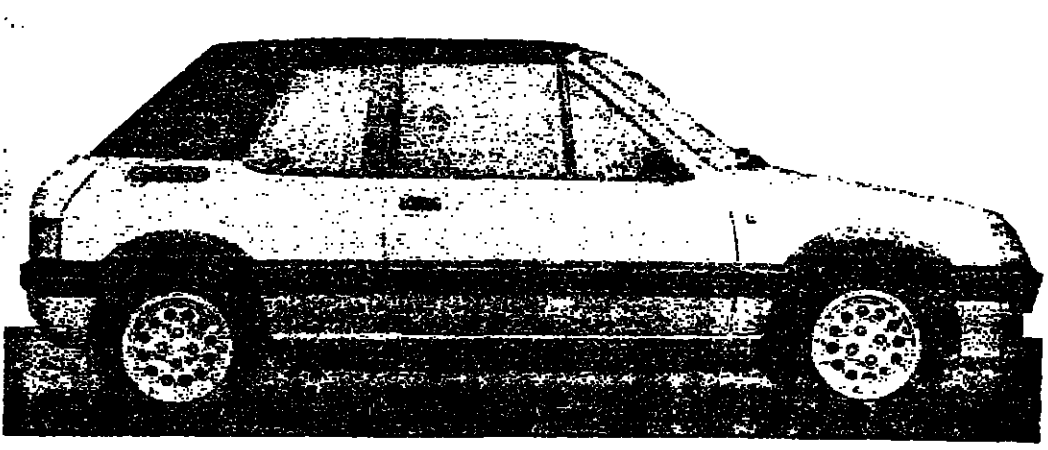
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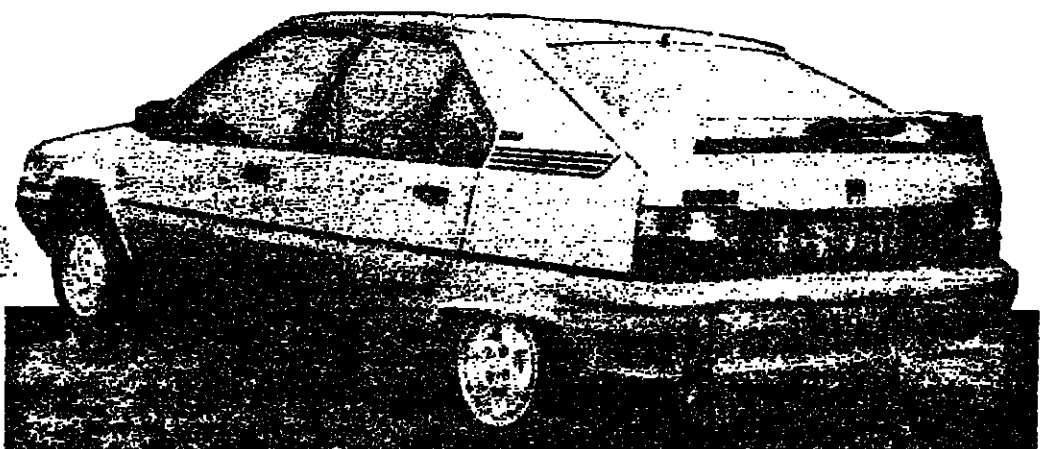
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Citroen and Peugeot have taken the German road, says Stuart Marshall

A sporty pair from France



The Peugeot 205 CIT11-1: entertaining, but too sporting for some?



The BX 19 GTi: no Citroen saloon ever went like this before.

IT USED to be French cars for comfort, German cars for high performance and sharply positive handling, but that does not apply any more. The Citroen BX and Peugeot 205 I have just been driving were as firmly sprung and mechanically muscular as any product of VAG.

They were, I must admit, decidedly sporting variants on the BX and 205 theme. The Citroen was the BX 19 GTi and the Peugeot a 205 CIT11-1—the C stands for Cabriolet. There could hardly have been a better week in which to test a car with a soft top that goes up and down as easily as a beach umbrella.

One forgets about the weather forecast and keeps an eye on the sky. If it looks like rain, up goes the Peugeot's hood. As soon as it stops, down it goes again. The operation takes perhaps 15 seconds and the folds and folds sit tidily just above the boot. For a finishing touch, a cover can be put on with four press studs. It is made from a stretch material which eliminates bad language and broken finger-nails.

Citroen and Peugeot are PSA Group companies. Although both marques preserve separate identities and characters, there has been a sensible rationalisation of components. Thus the five-speed gearboxes in both cars felt equally effortless, precise and silent. And the fascia of the BX was much more in line with Peugeot thinking than it used to be. The piano-accordion-type fingertip controls have been replaced by conventional lever switches and the turn indicators self-cancel. For Citroen, that is a technological breakthrough.

The revised fascia is common to all BX models now but the GTi has a number of exclusive features. Most obvious is a wing-like aerodynamic aid on the tailgate which I suppose it comes into play at close to the claimed maximum of 123 mph but I found it an irritating obstruction to rearward vision in the central mirror. The tyres are ultra-low-profile Michelin MXV 60 series. Badges apart, these are the only outward identifying marks. But as soon as you get in the BX 19 GTi and start the fuel-injected engine, you are aware it is something special.

The 1.9 litre four-cylinder puts out a healthy 125 horsepower at 5,500 rpm and develops maximum torque (in plain English, it pulls hardest) at 4,500 rpm. It lets the BX 19 GTi leap away from a standstill and reach 60 mph in about nine seconds, which would keep it ahead of a Ford Scorpio 2.8 litre. Much more importantly, it

provides mechanically unfused cruising at 80-85 mph and the kind of pick-up in fourth or fifth gear that makes overtaking effortless, quick and safe.

In normal use, the consumption will be in the low 30s mpg; rather less than that if you are exploiting the performance to the full.

The power assistance is so subtle the steering just feels pleasantly light at any speed. The self-leveling, ride-height-adjustable suspension was firmer than that of any Citroen I had driven before. The BX 19 GTi rolls hardly at all on all corners and feels very much at home on winding roads. On the debit side, you notice side winds.

As the ride is firm, so are the seats Germanic, not Gallic. They are fairly unyielding but well shaped hip-squeezers, designed to hold you in place as the car is driven fast. There is plenty of room in the back for two people, reasonable space for a third.

The Peugeot 205 CIT has a similar, though smaller, capacity engine to the Citroen. It produces 115 horsepower from its just under 1.6 litres, revs its head off if you want it to, or pulls hard in traffic if needs be. It is not quite so fast as the BX 19 GTi—a maximum 118 mph is claimed.

I found it most entertaining, with suspension designed for the ultimate in handling, not ride comfort. It pleads to be driven hard. In town, it feels over-tyred, with heavy low speed steering. On anything but the smoothest roads, the loss of rigidity due to the roof panel having been taken away shows—the fascia shakes from side to side and there is the odd creak in the body.

A sports car enthusiast would be entirely at home in the

Peugeot 205 CIT. But the buyer to whom performance is less important but who likes the idea of a compact car that can be opened to the sun and fresh air? I am not so sure. He—and especially she—could find the comfort/handling equation has been wrongly worked out.

The 205 CIT is quite expensive at £9,495 though still considerably cheaper than its most obvious rival, the VW Golf GTi convertible, which costs from £9,551 upwards. The comparable Ford Escort Gha Cabriolet is in the VW price brackets.

In France, but not yet here, Peugeot offers a smaller engine and cheaper version of the Cabriolet. It has less sporting suspension and rides more comfortably. That, I believe, is what a lot of cabriolet customers are after. When you use your car for short trips to the shops, school and the golf club, hood down in summer, the last thing you are worried about is whether you can out-corner all comers.

Anthony Greenstreet treads in a Poet Laureate's footsteps

Under Cornwall's spell

THE unusually thick pile of Financial Times in the general stores at Rock and Trebetherick shows that the middle classes are back for their dynamic summer holidays on the north Cornwall coast. Grandparents, parents, children, Volvo estates with dinghies on top and Labrador's inside—they arrive for the renewal of the spell cast when their parents first brought them here as children.

Some families have been coming for four generations—since as long ago as John Betjeman, laureate of the middle classes, who holidayed at Trebetherick before the First World War and died there in 1984. They come to revive memories of their ancestors and the departed generations of their dogs, and to pass on the talisman to their heirs:

Blessed be St Enodoc,
blessed be the wave,
Blessed be the springy turf,
we pray, pray to thee,
Ask for our children all the
happy days you gave
To Ralph, Vasey, Alastair,
Biddy, John and me.
Fathers self at St Enodoc.
No course has been so loved
in verse or so loved.
As Betjeman wrote of his
friend, E. A. Burden, whom he
lamented in *The Hornet*:

He loved each corner of
the links—
The stream at the eleventh,
The grey-green bents,
The pale sea-pinks,
The prospect from the
seventh.

Betjeman's own favourite spot

was the prospect of the fairway

from the 12th with the

sound of the Atlantic on the

shore behind. The fairway is carpeted with purple thyme, pink centaury, yellow bedstraw and pink and white bindweed; the splendid purple pyramidal orchid decorates the rough and all the singing grass.

Two holes skirt St Enodoc church where Sir John is buried. Thousands visit his grave and the turf is worn away. It is said that his success in recruiting defenders of the environment should have resulted in its destruction. Long ago, the widowed course-owner barred Sunday play on these holes after her husband's death. His rest was sacrificed, and play resumed, when she was granted 20 per cent of the green fees.

Mothers and smaller children go to Daymer Bay where safe bathing, rocks, pools, dunes and a stream spreading across the beach east the initial spell on Betjeman and countless others:

Here I would plan a dam and
there a sluice
And that direct the stream,
creating lakes,
A chain of locks descending
to the sea.

Older children go to Polzeath, one of the best surfing beaches. In the waves the scene is magnificent—north, the long crouching headland of Pentire, with its golden cornfields, south, across the bay, the no-less-splendid Stepper Point with its tall 17th century tower to guide ships of the once-flourishing trade between Padstow and South Ireland. Ahead, the immense rollers bear down and the air is drunched with

their tremendous roar. Small wonder the waves are dotted with 70-year-olds who will surf until they drop. Surfing started in the early 1930s, in those days porters at Waterloo, loading the Atlantic Coast Express, thought it strange that people should take coffin lids on holiday.

Sadly, grandparents may no longer make it up the steep path to Pentire Head and round to the Rumps—a marvellous cliff walk over National Trust land with immense views along the coast. Clouds of meadow-brown, with occasional red admiral, tortoise-shells and peacocks flutter up from the purple scabious and yellow ragwort. Here, you may hope to see the flickering wings of a peregrine falcon; and although



SIR JOHN BETJEMAN
Buried in churchyard

the Duchy's Bird Preservation Society records that the chough probably became extinct in Cornwall in 1874, two immature birds were seen on Pentire in 1982.

Here, too, you might meet with something inexplicable: sometimes, when the air is still, the long stone field walls resound with a tremendous hum as at the mouth of an enormous hive—and yet, there is not a bee in sight.

At Rock, there is dinghy and board sailing in the Camel; and today scores of craft traverse water considered too dangerous for small boats in the 1920s. At high tide, you can sail up the unspoiled estuary towards Wadebridge. No road runs along it and even the railway has gone, leaving a delightful walk past creeks where rot the hulks of schooners which, until 1914, carried slates from the deserted sinister quarries by the shore.

This is one of the best bird-watching spots in Britain and pied shelduck, curlew, heron, redshank and sandwich tern far outnumber the out-cry holiday-makers.

In the evening, families reunite at The Mariners by Rock Quay—a heady place for adolescents in display. Opened-up cars constantly bring new supplies of suburban bodies, and the sounds across the water of Portilly Cove to tiny St Michael's church—loud enough, one might think, to wake William Rouseball (d. 1659) under his massive carved slate slab.

Don't be a Sleeper,
and if a Sleeper,
Why then To Bed...



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Peter Fort discovers that American cuisine has been born again.

Back to the basics

AMERICANS have dreamed of the great American Cuisine for as long as they have dreamed of the great novel—and are just beginning to realise, despite the resolute battering of publicity that attends any American enterprise, that like *Knickerbocker* Fina, it has been here all along, waiting to be acknowledged rather than created anew.

It took the phenomenon of nouvelle cuisine to bring it fully to light. For decades we all believed that the great American food was an amalgam of commercially grasped opportunities—Boston baked beans and turkey roasts and spareribs and blueberry muffins and devil's food cake, all made available in whatever the latest convenience form, yesterday canned, today frozen, tomorrow irradiated.

These are the substitutes for domestic family eating and they form the basis of most fast food operations. But then there came heart disease and the need to eat less and less and the feeling of soot (all over the world) that they must do something about it or go out of business. American chefs are nothing like their French counterparts: they set off in pursuit of food that was light but pretty (of course) and expensive.

These practices can be applied to any kind of cuisine, bending and shaping its original tastes into new forms. Looking for the basic material, American chefs have settled on their traditional ingredients and local cookery. Behold, born again in a new form, the old cooking of the American heartland and it points up the fact that the United States is, by our standards, a southern country. Even Toronto (this) lies south of Virginia so American heartland cookery is a business of what we think of as meridional food—the food of sun-baked semi-desert land and warm near-tropical seashores. The land of the courgette, the bean, the chilli pepper and the peanut.

To an American almost all cuisine is "ethnic." So the cooking that carries the cachet both of the "ethnic" (ie, not ours) and the indigenous is the food of the South characterised (in New York at any rate) as Tex-Mex and Cajun. Tex-Mex is the cuisine of Texas and Mexico, Cajun, which I took to be a Spanish word to be pronounced "Colquiboun" is, I am now assured, the way an uneducated Creole or Louisiana negro pronounced the word Arcadian. Hence it rhymes with "ragin'." And ragin' is what it is. In New York at any rate, where there are plenty of restaurants which offer the specialties of gumbo and jambalaya and blackened fish. This last unappetising as it may sound, is in the hands of someone like Paul Prudhomme of New Orleans, truly Arcadian.

And it partakes of what may be seen as the other essential feature of the great American Cuisine. It tastes (and is) burnt. The flavour of charred food has always been much appreciated in America. They have had for years a product called Liquid Smoke which you paint onto your steaks to give it that primitive taste of combustion. No such deceptions for the true master of cajun cuisine: his fish really is burnt.

"Half-raw, half-burnt!" What a condemnation to pronounce on the food in an English boarding house. Yet such primitive flavour, bring a whiff of cave-dwelling reality to the sophisticated and modern foodery. They are to an American gourmet the assurance of a reality at the heart of his prettily decorated, calorie-low, salt-free plate of food. How encouraging that the food for the twenty-first century is looking so good.

Exotic Iceland

ICELAND has the most magical light of anywhere on earth, thought W. H. Auden, and he was probably right. Iceland is a strange, hauntingly beautiful country of volcanoes and glaciers, puffins and ponies. It is the place to visit if you are in search of peace, solitude and a sense of life clinging close to the sea.

To call exotic a Northern, Protestant country only two and a half hours from Heathrow may seem surprising, yet Iceland has some bizarre aspects that its unforgivable landscape. You can take the hottest swim of your life in water from the bowels of the earth. There are no floral roundabouts, no trees, and there is no need to take tunkan lotion. Beer is non-alcoholic and costs a fortune (we paid about £1.70 for a small can). Reykjavik boasts the largest nightclub in Europe where on Saturday nights the gentle and courteous Icelanders turn into a something much closer to a Viking ancestor.

Our guides were anxious to point out that their country's name is a misnomer. However, the facts make chilly reading. July is the warmest month, yet inland temperatures can be sub-zero and the average for the month is only about 10 degrees Celsius—less in mountainous areas.

I have heard Reykjavik wickedly described as Basking-stoke on ice, but in fact the Old

City has considerable charm, rather like some elderly east coast resort such as Cromer. The city is 200 years old this year but little remains of the traditional wooden architecture. After independence in 1918 the Icelanders swept away the old housing as vestiges of "Danish cultural oppression." However, the white houses with gaily coloured roofs are a pleasant sight and from every point you see the sea and snow-peaked mountains.

Because in geological terms Iceland is just a teenager, its earth smoulders and steams, spouts with geysers and experiences a volcanic eruption about every five years.

Our first day-trip from Reykjavik was to the Westmann Islands, half an hour's flight away, where the twin perils of fire and sea come vividly before the visitor. The islanders of Heimaey, the only inhabited island, see the past bisected into before and after the cataclysm of 1973. Then their volcano, pronounced dead by scientists, awoke and spewed out 200m tons of lava and ash. Thankfully the fishing fleet was in port and the 5,000 inhabitants were safely evacuated. Most returned to rebuild their town, but a sense of fatalism means many keep houses on the mainland. Crushed houses are still visible, and many streets end in the black mountain-wall of lava. A slumbering volcano is not

the islanders' only fear. In this small fishing community, each year the boats lost at sea touch people's lives with tragedy. Most Icelanders speak English, and the fitting, poetic turn of speech made highly evocative our guide's tales of drownings and rescues from the icy sea. Fortunately, our boat-trip round the island found the sea at its most benign. The cliffsides team with birds, the guillemots in lines like Edwardian gentlemen waiting for the dinner-gong, while puffins and eider-duck bob in the waves.

Guillemot was on the menu next day, although the season was too early for baby puffins. I could not rate Iceland highly gastronomically, nor did Auden in his *Letters from Iceland*. He described the dried fish memorably: "The tougher kind tasted like toe-nails and the softer kind like the skin of the soles of one's feet." Hakarl, ripened shark's meat, smelt too unbelievable for it to get past my nose. Potatoes browned in sugar are indeed barbaric, while if there is more to Icelandic baking than Mother's Fridge, the hotels have not realised it.

But then, Iceland is not the place for lous-eaters. Travellers like Sir Richard Burton, of Arabian Nights fame, and William Morris, came here in far more uncomfortable days to experience the wildness of Viking saga-country. You still feel it just an hour away from the capital at Thingvellir. As the site of the Althing, the world's most ancient parliament, the Vikings chose a deep fissure in a rock-strewn plateau, where geologists are enraptured by seeing the earth's crust part a few inches every year.

Here in 1000, Icelanders gathered before the law-giver's rock to hear that Valhalla was no more. Thenceforth they were Christian. Although the Church eased the transition by letting them continue a while to eat horse-meat and kill surplus baby girls.

Our "Golden Tour" continued with lunch at a community centre: boiled halibut and swede. Then I saw my first geyser, which I learned to pronounce geyser. Instead of thyming it with Ebenezer, the great old Geyser is now in semi-retirement and needs lubrication with soap-fakes to urge it into life. However, the Churna obligingly spurts every five minutes and the boiling mud round about is most satisfying. The nearby Gullfoss waterfall, one of Iceland's many falls, is wonderfully romantic, while a peregrine falcon nesting in an extinct crater provided another excitement.

In Iceland all visitors should have a Garbo complex and just want to be alone, to gaze across the desolate landscape and listen to the mournful cries of seabirds. How well such a longing fits in with escorted tours I could not say, but tours are the only way to explore the desert interior. The wild atmosphere probably survives campfire sociability and coach-travel. Hardier types should take walking or riding expeditions into the interior, but always with guides.

TRAVEL DETAILS: Tours run by Falcon Holidays (01-221 7278) include one week in a hotel in Reykjavik (228 (right inclusions); two or three extra trips from 228; escorted tours from 248; one week horse-riding tour from 289. Testimonial flights from Heathrow £195 plus £12.50 departure tax, from Glasgow, £171.

Patricia Morison

Gerald Cadogan sums up the lessons of his summer dig in Cyprus

SIX-AND-A-HALF weeks of digging in heat and dust at Maroni, Cyprus, ended as we draped the site in plastic. The long rolls are the cast-offs from the nearby greenhouses for tomatoes and cucumbers. I sent workmen out to scour for them and they returned with yards of the stuff.

The plastic will protect the (unbaked) mudbrick walls from the winter rains—hard to envisage now, but all too fierce when they come. Before we spread it, we had taken final photographs, sweeping the site so hard there was barely a speck of loose dust anywhere. It looked terrific. Then we summoned the bulldozer to remove the dumps and turned to writing summaries of the season's work and drawing the final plans and sections.

The plans are state-panels of what is there. The sections record the layers and their connections as they appear in the sides of the trenches. They should show which floors belong with which walls, which is the basis of the history of the buildings—the simple truth that you cannot have walls without floors helps us to reconstruct how the buildings were at any time.

It is not always as easy as it sounds. But this year an accumulation of floors in one part of our grand 13th century BC ashlar (dressed limestone) building has helped greatly. Some of its walls are later than its first floors, which should mean there was plenty of construction in the century or so of the life of the building. But if we find during the study season in 1987—next digging is in 1988—that there are joins among the pottery in the different floor levels, then the floors must have accumulated quickly, probably in less than 100 years.

In the street outside the ashlar building we have found more floor accumulations, clearly related with new buildings—the ancient equivalent of the summer road resurfacing.

more of the late history of the ashlar building, when it was a shrine from around 650 BC. Its direct evidence of when some of the walls were vandalised: 0-50 AD. Till now it has been circumstantial evidence, suggesting some earlier robbing and some as late as the last century.

At the beginning of the season we set out to recover as much as we could of the plan of the ashlar building. Good progress there. But some is still outside the fence and will wait till 1988. We also wanted to decide why it was put where it was in about 1250 BC. Some progress. We see now that the place was important as a copper and bronze centre before the ashlar building was put up. And we have some of the oldest copper ingots found in Cyprus.

About the use and building history of the grand ashlar building we now know very much more. But to explain why it was abandoned around 1,200 BC—for 550 years—we shall have to look elsewhere in Cyprus.

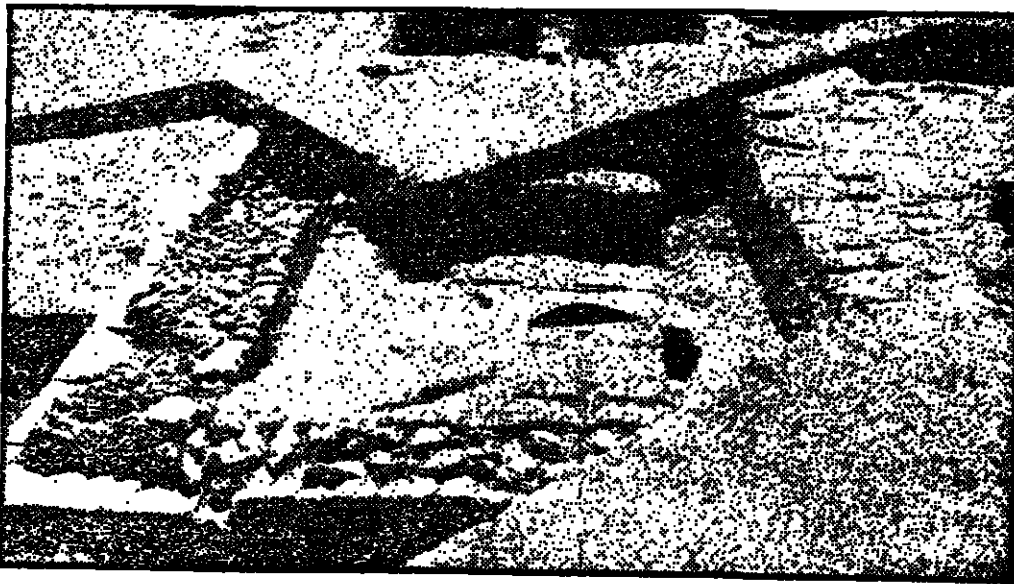
Something new is the evidence of Romans at Maroni. We have had a few sherds, which have been dismissed as chance finds. But part of a Roman glass bowl in the robbing

trench of one of the great ashlar walls is an important find. For the first time we have direct evidence of when some of the walls were vandalised: 0-50 AD. Till now it has been circumstantial evidence, suggesting some earlier robbing and some as late as the last century.

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A view from the dig in Cyprus

A day at a time

I AM ASTONISHED by the lack of interest shown by most nurserymen in day lilies. These are admirable herbaceous perennials, completely hardy, tolerant of most soils including those that are strongly alkaline, easily grown and long lived. They are in need of only one regular attention, confined to six or eight summer weeks, the removal of faded blooms which can become unsightly if permitted to accumulate.

Remember that the day lilies get their popular name because individual blooms last only one day, or two at most. It is the free production of flower buds that makes the best varieties so decorative but the opening flowers do not automatically push out the old ones, though some varieties do seem to be better than others in this respect.

American gardeners recognised the potentiality of day lilies at least 40 years ago. There has long been a thriving Hemerocallis Society in the US, busily engaged in promoting the interests of the plant and encouraging the production of new and better varieties. In the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley, Surrey, there is a long standing trial of day lilies which is always worth a visit at this time of year. I

was looking at it the other day and noted that the varieties have been awarded a First Class Certificate (FCC), the highest award the RHS bestows.

When I returned home and sought these super excellent varieties in nursery catalogues, I could find no more than four and for these it would be necessary to go to two different nurseries. Pursuing my studies a little further I looked for the Award of Merit (AM) varieties, the next category of excellence, of which there are 15 in the trial but this time I could not find one of them in the well known nursery catalogues I had chosen.

Just in case any nurseryman should read this column, here are the FCC varieties at Wisley: Amersham, Banbury Canary, Berlin Red, Blushing Bell, Burford, Burning Daylight, Cartwheels, Corky, Golden Chimes, Jake Russell, Lemon Bells, Marion Vaughn, Missenden, Nova, Pink Damask, Stafford, Stoke Poges and Torpoint. I have been watching these trials for a good many years and have no doubt that Amersham, Missenden and Berlin Red are the best red day lilies I have seen, though probably too much alike to be all needed in the same garden. Amersham is the lightest and brightest in

colour. The more recently introduced Berlin Red is a little shorter and more compact than Missenden and could well be the best of the trio for general planting but I have not

Gardening



known it quite long enough to be sure of this. Cartwheels is probably the best yellow day lily that can be purchased fairly easily but I think that Nova, sent to the Wisley trial by Anthony Estate in Cornwall, is an even better flower in form and colour. Anthony Estate was also the source of Gay Music, which has deep yellow flowers with extra petals which produce a very solid effective flower.

Pink of a kind has been available for a long time and long ago as 1962. It is still a

fine variety which produces a lot of well shaped flowers but it is a very yellow pink, the kind of shade you would be likely to find on the sunny face of a peach. Colder, bluer pinks came later and one of the nicest I have seen is Penelope Vestey, sent to Wisley by the Norton Hall nursery. It received an Award of Merit last year.

Cynthia Mary, which is similar in colour, was raised and sent to the trial by Anthony Estate. It has just been elevated from Highly Commended to Award of Merit and I wonder whether it will eventually attain an FCC.

Stoke Poges, also in this lilac-pink group, won its FCC as long ago as 1973 but I cannot recall having ever seen it on sale. I saw it at the end of July in the National Collection of Hemerocallis in Mount Hall Gardens, one of the public parks in the Epsom and Ewell area. Missenden and Amersham were also flowering here and the whole collection was making a fine display when I looked in. Unfortunately I could not see that any of the varieties had names attached to them and this severely limits the value of the collection to the public but I was told that steps are being taken to rectify this and also to add further information useful to gardeners.

Arthur Hellyer

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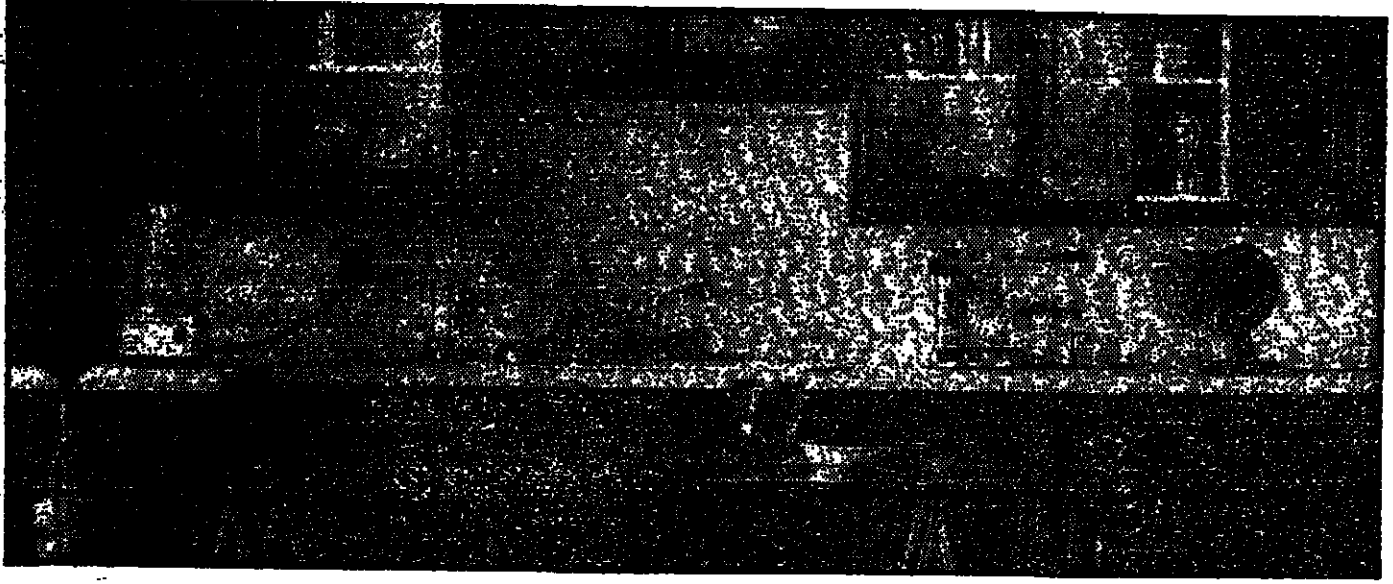
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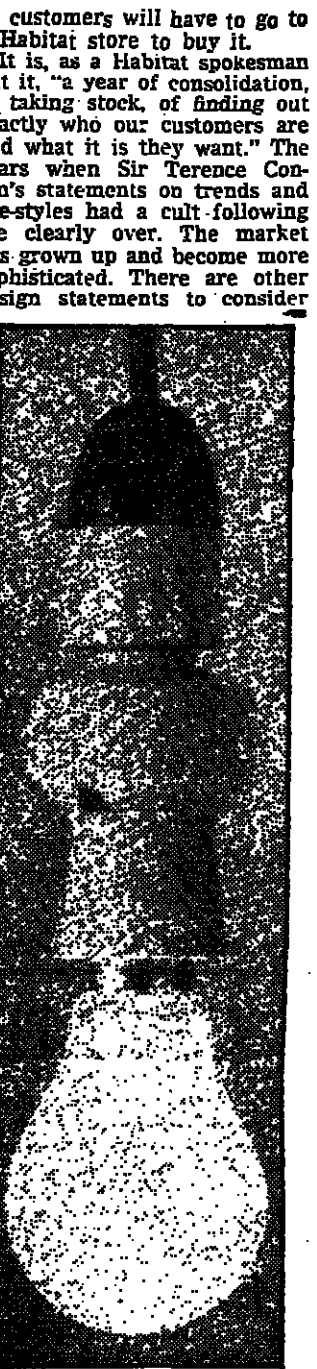
WHEN in 1972 the first Habitat catalogue with a cover price was launched, it was considered something of a landmark—this was not just a commercial catalogue given over to the simple selling of furniture. It was, decreed the pundits, a social document of our times. Anthropologists need do no more than thumb through its glossy pages to find a definitive picture of the life and times of a certain section of British society in the year of Our Lord 1972.

The fact that you had to pay for it (30p was the cover price) only reinforced the image of the Habitat catalogue as essential reading matter, a life-style guide to the upwardly mobile urban classes.

Fondue parties, I see, were just the thing. Bedrooms were light and airy, the duvet had arrived, three-piece suites were out. Walls were white, woods pale, saucy French and the coffee always fresh. The ultimate aim was to be surrounded by objects that cumulatively conveyed an environment at once classy and classless—the ultimate way of having it all ways.

This, though, was merely a beginning. As the years went by the theme was expanded. Food was a recurring obsession and we were given a quick course in the great (and not so great) cuisines of the world. As the cover price rose we were treated to instructive essays on bestwood furniture (origins thereof), how to choose your storage furniture, how to lay out food on a plate in order to seduce the eye and if some of it was a little patronising (“avoid elaborate trickery with napkins”) we must have learned something along the way. It began to be sold in newsagents, opening the way for a whole troop of imitators of the breed.

Those who got fond of the catalogue's discursive ways will be wondering what this year's edition, always out in mid-August, has in store. The answer is curious—we are back to the catalogue as plain catalogue, as a practical tool for selling the furniture. The cover price is still there (£1.50 but with a £5 voucher redeemable on any purchases over £50) but it will no longer be available through newsagents except in central London and Northern Ireland—out-of-London would-



be customers will have to go to a Habitat store to buy it.

It is, as a Habitat spokesman put it, “a year of consolidation, of taking stock, of finding out exactly who our customers are and what it is they want.” The years when Sir Terence Conran's statements on trends and life-styles had a cult following are clearly over. The market has grown up and become more sophisticated. There are other design statements to consider

— Laura Ashley with its more traditional approach, its rustic charm, Next Interiors, as yet still small but offering a more sophisticated, less rigorously contemporary option, Marks & Spencer with its huge, captive audience, MFI which seems bent on going upmarket and looting over them all, and the big unknown — the arrival of IKEA, the hugely successful Swedish chain, early next year.

No wonder Habitat is taking stock. Sir Terence has long been an admirer of the IKEA operation and with its gigantic resources, its declared intention of going for large, edge-of-town stores, its known strength in



THE NEXT SOLUTION

SORRY TO remind you so forcibly that winter is on its way but this week the Next shops unveil its autumn look and its new strategy for continued growth. There can hardly be a woman in the country who isn't aware of Next—one of its troubles has been that we were all almost too aware. Though most of us loved the designs and appreciated the value, the love-affair began to cool when we learned to spot a Next outfit at 50 yards.

George Davies (the guru behind the chain) soon realised that he was faced with a classic marketing dilemma—how to grow (in other words sell more clothes) without the increased sales making the clothes themselves seem less desirable.

He has solved it brilliantly—this week Next shops will offer two separate collections to would-be customers. Roughly half the shops will remain simply Next shops while the other half become Next Too (a few of the larger ones, mainly in central London, will sell both collections).

Broadly speaking, the spirit behind the collections will be unchanged—bright, up-to-the-minute clothes, in co-ordinated ranges at very good prices. Next Too, however, is designed to appeal to a more sophisticated (read older?) taste. Colours will home in on classic neutral shades like charcoal grey, oatmeal, black and there will be lots of natural fabrics. Good news indeed for those who found the colours of Next a little too memorable.

Stars of the winter season look like being the dark grey over-sized coats, the pure wool Prince of Wales check city collection (a good coat-dress and a suit with pleated skirt and easy jacket that looks elegant yet relaxed), creamy cords and a very good rayon/cotton raincoat with check lining.

Photographed right is a typical example of the Next Too winter look. The button back skirt (in grey/black or purple/black) is £21.99, the striped sweater in the same colours is £22.99, the plain polo neck sweater is £17.99. Fabrics are a mixture of lambswool and acrylic. The whole reminds me irresistibly of a famous label outfit I bought last year which cost three times as much.



AFTER TEN years of a bull market for fine wines in London salerooms, the 1985 auction year which has just ended showed a distinct fall. Sotheby's suggests one of about 30 per cent. Christie's less. 1975-76 had been the first year of recovery after the slump that brought even first-growth clarets, by-passing the stricken Bordeaux trade, direct into the London auction rooms from their chateaux cellars. Since then prices for rarities, for esteemed claret and port vintages had risen steadily until the spring of 1985.

For example, Lafite '45, which fetched £560 a dozen in 1976 had reached £4,000 by 1985, and Mouton-Rothschild '61 rose from £310 to £3,000. In 1976 the Petrus 'boom' had scarcely started, with the '61 going for £420, but by 1985 it was almost unobtainable, and a single case brought £9,500.

By last year even the scarcely-bottled, but widely publicised 1985s had soared, largely owing to American buying: Lafite to £880 a case, Mouton-Rothschild to £790 and Petrus to £2,780. Yet in the last 12 months these three went as low as £480, £538 and £1,760 a case respectively, though there has been some recovery in recent months, with top prices of £605, £620 and £2,310. Similar falls occurred throughout the fine wine market, particularly for older favoured clarets.

The main cause has been the fall in the dollar that began in spring last year and has continued ever since. It was largely the American market that had supported the rising prices. Although the Swiss and the Germans have also been significant buyers, their increasingly favourable exchange rates against the pound have not led them to replace the hesitant Americans.

Under these circumstances the London auction houses have actually done better than expected. Christies in King Street sold a total of £5,657,392 (plus 2.4 per cent), though to achieve this it sold 14,500 lots, compared with 12,900 last year, and the percentage disposed of dropped from a very high 98 per cent to 88 per cent. Other UK and overseas sales brought in another £2,977,270. Altogether it held 79 sales. Sotheby's, with only 21 sales had an overall total of £2,845,844 (minus 4.3 per cent).

Both houses face additional competition from the American-owned International Wine Auctions, which held its first



London sale in June 1985, and has carried out four since, with a sold total exceeding £1.5m. Phillips, who now operate from Oxford, sold £286,000 (plus 14 per cent) in their four sales.

If the wine auction market has not been all that lively, there has been no lack of rarities, headed by the bottle of Lafite 1787, bearing Thomas Jefferson's initials, that Christie's sold in December, after a saleroom battle between two American publishers, for £105,000—a record price for any bottle of wine. Sotheby's sold a bottle of Lafite 1808 for £10,780.

Record prices were almost commonplace in three exceptional Bordeaux sales conducted by Christies: one in October commemorated the purchase of Ch. d'Yquem by the Lur-Saluces family in 1783; single bottles of the 1889 and 1890 fetched £400 and £340 apiece. Exceptional in another way was the sale of 100 cases of the 1967 vintage, regarded as the finest since 1945, and bought in 1977, when Christie's top price was £170 a case. Last October they raised a total of £181,200; that is, £1,812 a case.

The third sale must also be considered unique: from the private cellar of an anonymous Bordeaux sales connoisseur, bought in 1977, when Christie's top price was £170 a case. Last October they raised a total of £181,200; that is, £1,812 a case.

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(£1,350). Mouton-Rothschild 1889 (£825). Latour 1900 (£1,450 a magnum) and Yquem 1861 (£1,250—the highest price for a bottle of white wine ever sold in the London saleroom). In another Christie's sale a case of Yquem 1900 went for £7,500.

Although Sotheby's could not match these sales, their Fyvie Castle sale in December included such mature vintage port as Taylor '35 and '45 that brought £1,430 and £1,540 a case respectively. In March a magnum of Lafite 1869, originally sold by the chateau to Prince Napoleon, reached £3,520. Then in May in a sale of 26 vintages from the cellar of Ch. Laussan a bottle of 1870 realised £330; a very high price for an unclassified Medoc. Petrus figured prominently in International Wine Auction's sales, with a magnum of the very rare '45 making £2,100 and an '82 imperial (eight bottles) £3,500.

For some not altogether clear reason, burgundy in the saleroom attracts nothing like the attention given to claret. Only the Domaine de Romanée-Conti wines are in the millionaire-drinkers' class, and last year's top price was £3,600 for 6 magnums of the 1971 Romanée-Conti; a single bottle of its 1971 Montrachet made £480.

So far the fall in prices has not led to any rush to sell for fear of further decline, but there is no general indication of recovery. Vintage port prices, which held up well for most of the year, have recently tended to drop. There is, however, a great deal of wine, particularly of young claret, on the market, and it would not be surprising if there was profit-taking by those who bought early, even on the '82 and '83 clarets that were often bought for investment.

It will be interesting to see the effects of Christie's now reluctantly joining Sotheby's in imposing a 10 per cent buyer's premium: good for vendors through lower commissions, but discouraging for buyers. Sotheby's certainly lost out to Christie's when it initiated this two years ago. Will Christie's prices now fall? Or will the much smaller International Wine Auctions, which has recently re-affirmed it will not impose a buyers' premium, pick up some business from their senior rivals?

Edmund Penning-Rowse

Flower power rethought

LOOK AROUND in the home furnishing departments and you'll see a rich new crop of floral tributes blooming in the most unlikely places. Colefax & Fowler's inimitable chintzes go on forever and Laura Ashley's innocent way with a daisy is now a permanent part of the British domestic scene but this year has seen a sudden revival of interest in the decorative potential of the flower. Not just traditional purveyors of a conventional and cosy British look but some of our most interesting and forward-looking companies have rethought floral possibilities.

Possibly the most interesting and certainly the most dramatic is Howard Hodgkin's series of rich and colourful fabrics produced for Designers' Guild. Tricia Guild, the guiding talent behind the company, has long been an admirer and collector of Howard Hodgkin's work and it seemed to her a good notion to harness his painterly genius

to produce the first in what is hoped to be a series of artists' fabrics.

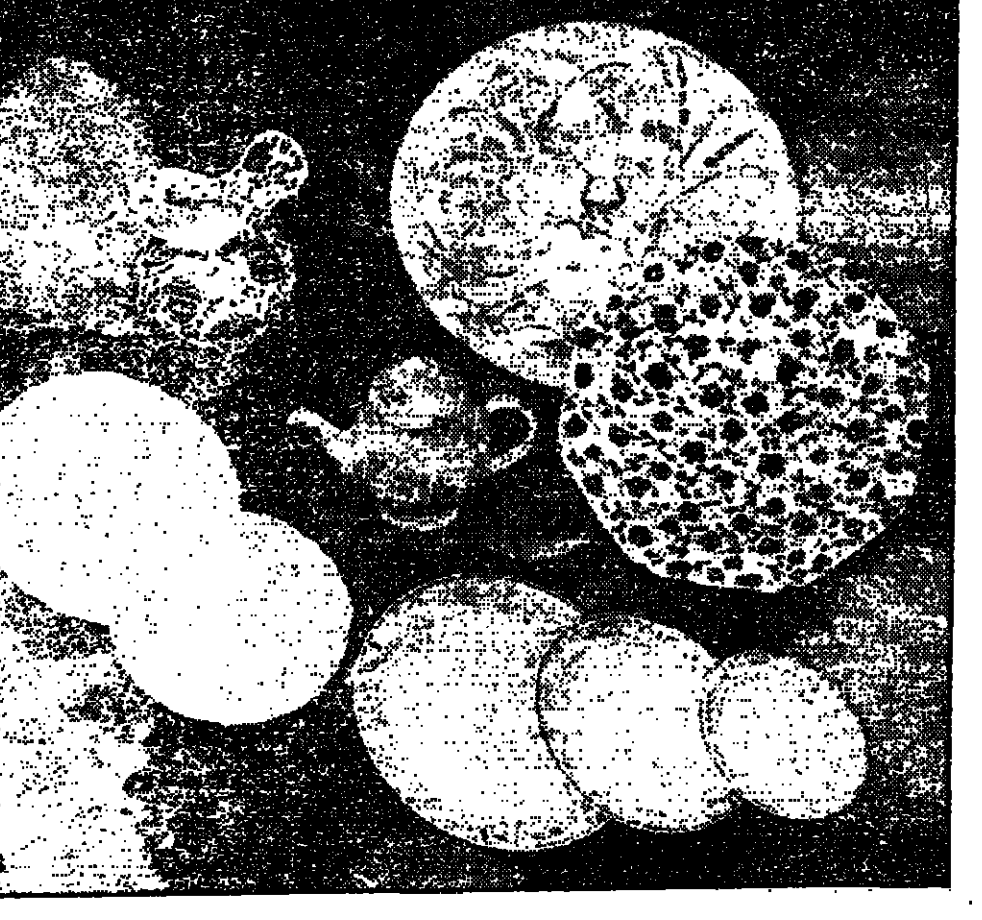
There is a long and honourable history of artists being involved with fabric design (of whom probably the most notable were Dufy and Matisse) but I certainly can't remember it happening in recent times.

The results, it hardly needs saying, are spectacular—rich, strong, infinitely memorable. There are two very dramatic designs—Large Flower (which features a huge crimson flower, photographed below right green stems and leaves against a midnight background) and Leaf (a charcoal or indigo leaf-like shape on white), both of which are in 100 per cent cotton chintz and sell at £37.50 for a metre and £137.50 wide. Designed to work in with them and, therefore, necessarily much less dramatic, are Moss (in a smudgy crimson or charcoal pattern) and earth (smudgy malachite or indigo). These last two are in 100 cotton

satin and sell at £35 a metre.

The fabrics are not cheap, as you can see, and are probably not to everybody's taste, though I think they are stunning. Tricia Guild herself thinks they are most likely to appeal to people who are already familiar with Howard Hodgkin's work.

In an interesting blurring of the pigeon-holes (is it art or is it commerce?) Tricia Guild has for some time had several Howard Hodgkin works on show in her King's Road showroom. Now the Bernard Jacobson Gallery at 2a Cork



Street, London, W1 (where Howard Hodgkin sells his work) will also be selling the material. The fabrics can also be seen and ordered through Harrods, Liberty, Harvey Nichols (which have used metres of it for its Sloane Street windows) and Village Green in Chalfont St Giles. All Designers' Guild stockists will also be able to order it.

Floral motifs have also been turning up in unusual abundance in the work of potters. Photographed here is a small selection of some of the most interesting around.

1—MARY CASE is a water-colourist and landscape artist who also uses her very gentle painterly talents to produce a distinctive line in pottery. Her most distinctive qualities are probably her soft colours and the fine, detailed drawing of her decorative work. This vast bowl (wonderful for holding fruit or for pasta) features flowers, grasses, leaves and frogs and she uses a gentle yellow/green or pink/blue palette. The bowl is £125. Contact her at 52 Warriner House, South Bank Business Centre, Warriner Gardens, London SW 11. (01-622 0436).

2—CLIVE DAVIES has had exhibitions in a host of galleries up and down the country and is probably best-known for his distinctive colour glazes. He came straight to pottery from his National Service in 1962 and now he has had time to develop a style of his own his work is becoming increasingly sought-after. His style is highly decorative, richly imbued with colour and currently floral motifs are blooming all over his wares.

This strong and beautiful eight-sided plate, featuring deep violet flowers with green leaves and sporadic red dots is £90. Available from a large selection of his work at Graham & Green, 4 & 7, Elgin Crescent, London, W11.

3—THERE IS currently a great revival in the old art of spongeware and Emma Bridgewater has produced a ravishing collection of tableware, all featuring the typical gentle colours of this technique—there are bowls and plates, cups and saucers, all embellished with great roses in green and pink, pink and yellow or blue and yellow. Photographed here is a teapot from the range, £22.50 (p + p £2.55) from The General Trading Company, 144, Sloane Street, London, SW1.

4—A WONDERFULLY free and generous jug by Clive Davies—embellished with great red flowers, £50, also from Graham & Green.

5—THIS IS the only selection of tableware that is mass-produced—but very prettily so. By the French company of Salins, there are two designs. Annabelle large flowers and Annabelle small flowers, both of which come in the same colourways so they can be mixed together at will. Besides the plates there are coffee pots, tea pots, vegetable dishes. In soft yellow, blue, apricot, the large plates are £8.49 each, the small ones, £6.99. All from Inshop, 18 New Cavendish Street, London, W1.

6—THE Royal Academy asked one of its members Philip Sutton, a well-known painter, to design some plates for use in the Royal Academy canteen—they were stolen so regularly that the Academy decided to sell them. The three sizes look particularly good together. The borders, when seen layered together, gain in depth and richness. The large 10 1/2 in plate is £9.95, the 7 1/2 in plate is £7.25 and the 6 in version, £5.25. There is also an 8 in bowl selling at £7.95. All can be bought from the Royal Academy, Piccadilly, London, W1. A new catalogue, featuring all its wares, will be available from September 1.

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L. v.d. P.

Rule by degrees

OXFORD AND EMPIRE: THE LAST LOST CAUSE
by Richard Symonds. Macmillan £29.50, 366 pages

WHY OXFORD and the Empire? Why not Cambridge or both? The author answering his own questions agrees that a good book could be written about Cambridge and its Empire connections, but he points out that at least in the earlier part of its period there was a "preponderance of Oxford men in the posts in which Imperial policies were decided and implemented."

It is certainly true that between 1880 and 1914 in the Indian and Colonial Services Oxford men outnumbered Cambridge by nearly two to one, and that the great majority of Prime Ministers and Foreign Secretaries who determined Empire policy were Oxonians. The Colossus, Cecil Rhodes,

who opened up Southern Africa was an Oxford man, and the greatest Viceroy of India, Curzon, was another. Over the whole period of British rule in India 15 out of 20 Viceroys or Governors-General were from Oxford—12 from one college, Christ Church, which can also boast of 13 Prime Ministers.

But the author observes that the difference between Oxford and Cambridge in this respect was not merely a matter of numbers. Leslie Stephen reviewing the life of Benjamin Jowett, the great Master of Balliol, observed that Oxford had "long been fertile in prophets." Cambridge was different, "inclined to regard their apparent barrenness with a certain complacency." They did not deny the existence of the soul, but knew that it should be kept in its proper place. Oxford has always been less purely academic, more outgoing, more "political," more

concerned with the world than Cambridge. Why this should be so is difficult to answer. But it cannot be entirely accidental that over the centuries there have been nearly twice as many Oxford as Cambridge Prime Ministers and that since the Second World War Oxford has produced seven out of nine while the Cambridge score has been nil.

Oxford's imperial pre-eminence was not so much due to Christ Church which effortlessly produced statesmen as it always had from the grand aristocratic world for which it catered; rather, it was the result of proselytism by Balliol among the middle and upper middle classes. Milner was more typical of the College than Curzon, and Balliol itself was unlike any other college in Oxford or Cambridge.

Jowett took a unique degree of trouble in nurturing the future rulers of Britain and Empire, giving his undergraduates suitable contacts and generally placing them in life. As the author observes, "whilst his admission to Florence Nightingale that he would like to govern the world through his pupils was a humorous exaggeration, the Balliol network was remarkably pervasive."

Like other Oxonians Jowett's protégés were almost to a man brought up on the classics, and numerous parallels which historians today would regard as highly misleading were made between the ancient and modern world. Gilbert Murray considered that "at home England is Greek. In the Empire she is Roman." Aristotle's Ethics made Sir George Schuster see in a flash the whole purpose of life and, curiously, guided him to become Finance Minister in India. Rhodes carried Aristotle as well as Marcus Aurelius to the diamond diggings where he made his fortune, and as a result brooded upon the question "How can man do greatest good?" One means evidently was by making the greatest amount of money—anyway as a stepping-stone.

Cecil Rhodes is, of course, a key figure in the story of Oxford and Empire. No man has



Benjamin Jowett: mentor of proconsuls

had more memorials in Oxford, and Rhodes House, that remarkable building by Sir Herbert Baker, is the most appropriate of all. "I like the big, simple and barbaric," Rhodes told him. He would have approved of this posthumous monument. The importance of Rhodes's Scholarship is a subject of perennial controversy. They did not produce what he intended insofar as one can make out his intentions, but they have had a real impact on Oxford. How far they have affected their home countries is less clear.

The great Oxford Empire figures before 1914 were in favour of imperial federation, a closer union which could, under a tariff wall, face the threat of Germany and America. This was the dream of the association called "The Round Table" largely based on members, all Oxonian, of Milner's famous "Kinderzarten" which tried to deal with the aftermath of the Boer War—disastrously as events turned out.

Nine came from New College where Milner, after his Balliol career, became a Fellow, and four from All Souls. The guru of the Round Table was Lionel

Curzon, one of Oxford's most crashing bores, who dominated endlessly about an Imperial Parliament long after it was a clearly hopeless cause. Neither the Oxford ideal of closer empire unity nor the later one of a freely associated commonwealth of countries governed by the rule of law was in the event to be realised. Perhaps the Oxford critics of Empire were right—and some Oxonians were very critical: the Empire really was Oxford's last lost cause.

This is an interesting book on an interesting subject even if it is slightly disjointed, somewhat anecdotal and has a conclusion which is not very conclusive. But the author has investigated the Oxford connection with the Empire between the mid-19th century and the Second World War in aspects that have not been examined before. His book will be essential reading for the Editors of the History of Oxford University currently being published in eight volumes. But it is more than a source of future historiography. It stands on its own feet.

Robert Blake

Doing his best

THE CHARACTER FACTORY: BADEN-POWELL AND THE ORIGINS OF THE BOY SCOUT MOVEMENT
by Michael Rosenthal. Collins. £15.00, 355 pages

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, Associate Dean of Columbia College, New York, and previously the author of a book on Virginia Woolf, takes here a long hard look at the Boy Scout movement. With an erudite parade of evidence, some of it brought into the light of day for the first time, he discovers all manner of hidden factors contradictory of the healthy, fresh image.

If I might declare an interest, I am a Scout, and I have my own experience of scouting, cubbing mainly, was brief and undistinguished. I shall always be grateful for learning how to tie a reef-knot; the bowline was, and remains beyond my capacity. But until I read this book, Boy Scouts always evoked agreeably nostalgic memories: Ralph Reader filling the stage of the Scala Theatre in Charlotte Street with a vast lustily singing chorus in the annual Gang Show, or Scouts ringing the front-door bell and offering to run an errand for a bob (5p). That sadly has all stopped now.

In our century the youth movement idea was taken over by the likes of Hitler and Mussolini and made to serve their own evil ends. Rosenthal warmly welcomed both the Hitler Jugend and the Italian Balilla when they first appeared; but then so did a lot of other people blind to the realities. Yet 1937 does seem to be slightly late in the day to be trying to establish official relations between the Scouts and the Hitler Youth.

It is one of several profound contradictions unearthed by this author about an extraordinary charismatic individual; B-P was always so nearly on the side of the angels. The anomalies all stem from one basic contradiction: a man whose training and outlook was military, whose great moment of glory was at one of the climaxes of the Boer War, trying and succeeding to exclude all overt military content from the Scout movement. Scouting had its genesis in the cadet corps of Mafeking during the siege; the boys who ran messages behind the lines and played their part in the

successful outcome crystallised the idea in B-P's mind.

Later, in 1906, he adumbrated it in a letter published in the Eton College Chronicle, discovered and reprinted here by Rosenthal. The letter suggests that during the holidays the boys from the Corps should form "clumps" among the youth in their home towns on the model of mediaeval knights and their retainers, and teach the local boys various skills including "how to aim and shoot with miniature rifles."

Much of this early programme and imagery was dropped later but the impulse survived, to be inculcated in the average working boy with a sense of obedience, loyalty to the group and teach him to emulate the officer-like qualities of those above him in the social hierarchy, remained. He was to be prepared for all manner of emergencies not least any invasion of these islands by a foreign power.

Had this aim been all there was to scouting it is doubtful if

it would have caught on in the way it did. What Rosenthal does not sufficiently emphasise is that when B-P came to formulate the movement properly he understood that it had not only to be beneficial for boys but fun.

If the cadets of Mafeking were one model, others were those popular fictional heroes, Sherlock Holmes and Kim. The entire military mystique was brilliantly transmuted into the lore of the forest; the miniature rifles turned into staves; infantry manoeuvres replaced by exercises in tracking. B-P had the genius to see how the movement could be made universally acceptable. But where did he acquire his detailed knowledge of woodcraft? The chief source was the work of Ernest Thompson Seton whose novel *The Two Savages* published in 1905 while scouting was brewing in B-P's mind narrates with appropriate drawings "the adventures of two boys who lived as Indians and what they learned of Seton's ideas on the subject of the Scout movement. Rosenthal's account of the appropriation of the games and imagery of the woodcraft movement with insufficient acknowledgement and what he considered the betrayal of the purity of its ideal.

Some English readers have seen this interesting, well-argued book as an attack by an American on a hallowed British institution. They forget that the movement is equally popular in America; nor is Rosenthal the only American scholar to have studied it. The critic Paul Fussler, for instance, writes in *The Boy Scout Handbook* and *Other Observations*.

The pliability and adaptability of the scout movement explains its remarkable longevity, its capacity in flourish in a world dramatically different from its founder's. Like the Roman Catholic Church, the scout movement knows the difference between cosmetic and real change, and it happily embraces the one to avoid any truck with the other. Witness the new American flag patch, now worn at the top of the right sleeve. It betokens no access of jingoism or threat to civilised internationalism. It simply conduces to dignity by imitating a similar affectation of police and fire departments in anarchic towns like New York City.

Let us leave it there. Anthony Curtis



Baden-Powell at Mafeking



Alfred Milner: aims in Africa

SONG OF THE SILENT SNOW
by Hubert Selby. Marion Boyars. £9.95, 214 pages

CAN'T BUY ME LOVE
by Michael Estorick. Duckworth. £9.95, 210 pages

PAST CARING
by Robert Goddard. Robert Hale. £10.95, 501 pages

DIVERTIMENTO 1889
by Guido Morselli. Translated from the Italian by Hugh Shankland. Chatto & Windus. £9.95, 145 pages

PACK OF CARDS: STORIES 1978-1986
by Penelope Lively. Heinemann. £10.95, 323 pages

THE NOTORIETY achieved by Hubert Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn* distracted attention from his merits as a naturalistic masterpieces. *The Room*, the finest of all his novels, should be appreciated for what it really is: the courageously meticulous account of a man driven into insane and aggressive paranoia by his tubercular sickness.

Selby is very unusual in these days: as an author who actively loathes the mental horrors he depicts, but sticks grimly to his task of recording them. He has deep compassion, a straightforward vision of decency and kindness—important in our drab and shallow age—and is probably one of the six best novelists writing in the English language. There is even something heroic in his

COLLECTED STORIES by Tennessee Williams. Introduced by Gore Vidal. Secker and Warburg. £15.00, 574 pages

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS is probably best known to the general public as the weirdo, drug-taking author of such "sex extravaganzas" as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Baby Doll*. Gore Vidal has something to say about this aspect of the Williams legend in the introduction he has written to the American playwright's *Collected Stories*. "For 30 years," says Vidal, "he was... denounced as a sick, immoral, flagrant, lower middle class WASP. Southern airs-and-graces division." Williams believed what he was told. Consumed with guilt, he turned increasingly to drink, pills and quacks, and the work of his later years ("a fetid swamp" said Time) became a them-fulfilling prophecy. Even in the period of his decline, however—roughly the

20 years before his death in 1983—he maintained the habit of writing daily, revising endlessly. This perfectionism did not make him the world's best writer—his style is full of repetitions and ponderous images—but it kept his art alive. It also established what Vidal, despite his criticism, recognises as a highly distinctive "narrative tone of voice." The result is as idiosyncratic and compelling a collection of short fiction as can be found anywhere in the 20th century.

Vidal—who better than he to be authoritative about his friend's work—divides these sometimes fairy-tale-like tales into four periods: those written up to 1941, when he was 30; the stories of 1941-45 when the Glass Menagerie had made his name; the triumphant years from 1945-52 when, as the author of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, he became world-

famous; and the pieces he wrote during the final 20 years. The first group consists of 13 stories, including the youthful "The Vengeance of Atrifurus," published when Williams was 17—a curiosity which few had seen until the unnamed editor's dug it out of the files of *Weird Tales*. Also written during this period is "Twenty Seven Wagon Loads Full of Cotton," which was to become the one-act play of the same name and the germ of *Baby Doll*.

The stories of the 1941-45 period are nine in number, and here the material gets sharper, the characters more particular. The third group of 10 begins with the notorious "Desire and the Black Masses" and contains also "The Night of the Iguana." The Resemblance between a Violin Case and a Coffin and "Three Players of a Summer Game." There are 17 stories in the final period, all even the hackneyed "Miss Coyote of Greene" (white female desires black men)—oddly compelling precisely because of Williams's way of telling them.

Vidal will not have it that these stories are "merely" sketches for Williams's plays. They all began, according to Williams himself, out of physical desire. He would then try to consummate his desire in a story—perhaps while the chase was proceeding. Only if his purpose was unfulfilled would he turn the story into a play—when he could, like God, order life after his own pattern.

young man coming to terms with his Jewishness, his resentments and his failures through his reading of the letters of a First World War hero to his family. This hero is fictitious but one assumes he is modelled on Siegfried Sassoon; this does not work. The author has an obsession with aristocratic country life which he has not at all worked out. But the book, not very interestingly written, is full of incidental insights. It is consistently intelligent.

Past Caring is compared by its publisher to John Fowles's *The Magus*. In fact it is fairly confident, but it is written more on the lines of Edwardian narratives by such writers as the now neglected Oliver Onions (particularly *According to the Evidence*). It tells of a young history graduate's quest to discover the secret behind the sudden resignation of a promising cabinet minister of Churchill's generation. The secret is predictable, and the story not always exciting.

Divertimento 1889 is a novel by Guido Morselli, well translated by Hugh Shankland. Although he published two non-fiction books in his lifetime, Morselli was only "discovered" as a novelist in 1977 after his death by suicide. He is not now

regarded as "one of Italy's most important 20th century authors," as the publishers claim—but rather as a very interesting one. This novel is a fable about King Umberto I's attempt to evade his responsibilities. It will appeal to those who like highly intelligent, frothy satire. It will irritate those who like substance. But the reasons for the neurotic Morselli's suicide, not long after he wrote it, are always apparent: his notion that readers are better off with untrue "myths" because they obtrude unhappily, and gives his narrative a certain sad appeal.

Penelope Lively's stories—there are 34 of them—are consistently witty, carefully written, observant, and readable. Perhaps it is churlish, then, for me to complain that throughout my reading of them I found myself wondering just when she would turn goodness into excellence. They lack true edge, and the author is too content to rest on the laurels of her good looks. This very goodness leads us to say: "could do better." But we had better be grateful.

Martin Seymour-Smith

Fiction

Selby's next exit

Alas, his new collection of stories, published by the excellent Marion Boyars—who has always published him in this country—does not show him at his strongest. He somewhat disperses his power and compassion in these tales of a New Yorker—usually called Harry, but only the same man in as much as he is set upon by his own demons. The novel form is the one most suitable for Selby's genius. However, that is to judge him by his own very high standards. Certainly these are excellent tales—so long, the reader thirsty for the best will think, as Selby is now writing a novel.

Perhaps the best of them is "Fortune Cookie," in which Selby for the first time demonstrates that he is by no means without humour. It is a story in which most people will recognise themselves. The rest vary in quality: at times Selby is too content to register his own horror at the bleakness of human behaviour without sufficiently interesting us; at others he achieves substance. But all in all, this is essential reading, even if here the author is marking time.

Michael Estorick's first novel, *Can't Buy Me Love*, is about a

Story cures for love

20 years before his death in 1983—he maintained the habit of writing daily, revising endlessly. This perfectionism did not make him the world's best writer—his style is full of repetitions and ponderous images—but it kept his art alive. It also established what Vidal, despite his criticism, recognises as a highly distinctive "narrative tone of voice." The result is as idiosyncratic and compelling a collection of short fiction as can be found anywhere in the 20th century.

Vidal—who better than he to be authoritative about his friend's work—divides these sometimes fairy-tale-like tales into four periods: those written up to 1941, when he was 30; the stories of 1941-45 when the Glass Menagerie had made his name; the triumphant years from 1945-52 when, as the author of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, he became world-

famous; and the pieces he wrote during the final 20 years. The first group consists of 13 stories, including the youthful "The Vengeance of Atrifurus," published when Williams was 17—a curiosity which few had seen until the unnamed editor's dug it out of the files of *Weird Tales*. Also written during this period is "Twenty Seven Wagon Loads Full of Cotton," which was to become the one-act play of the same name and the germ of *Baby Doll*.

The stories of the 1941-45 period are nine in number, and here the material gets sharper, the characters more particular. The third group of 10 begins with the notorious "Desire and the Black Masses" and contains also "The Night of the Iguana." The Resemblance between a Violin Case and a Coffin and "Three Players of a Summer Game." There are 17 stories in the final period, all even the hackneyed "Miss Coyote of Greene" (white female desires black men)—oddly compelling precisely because of Williams's way of telling them.

Vidal will not have it that these stories are "merely" sketches for Williams's plays. They all began, according to Williams himself, out of physical desire. He would then try to consummate his desire in a story—perhaps while the chase was proceeding. Only if his purpose was unfulfilled would he turn the story into a play—when he could, like God, order life after his own pattern.

That is why he was so compulsive a working playwright.

Now that he has gone so ungraciously into that good night, this sad little man with the gift of tongues, this misfit from St Louis, bids fair to become a cult figure. Vidal, who devoted his own life to a conspiracy theory a long time ago, sees him to be a victim of American society's "enduring hatred of women, a legacy from the Old Testament, enriched in due course by St Paul." The gospel according to the contemporary American Puritan is that a man who has sex with another man is behaving like the fallen Eve, and therefore doubly damned. Unlike Vidal, Williams accepted this taboo, although it did not stop him—like Miniver Cheevy—sinning incessantly.

When Williams was in his fifties, Vidal suggests that like *Gewinner Pearce* in "The Knightly Quest," published in 1966, he began to suspect that "at the earth's centre are not a couple of noble mysteries but a couple of joke books." "Right on, Bird," says Vidal (his name for Williams was "the Glorious Bird"). "It was a nice coincidence that just as Tennessee was going round the bend, the United States was doing the same." Or, as the wounded, self-destructing Tennessee himself so lovingly put it in those heady days of flower power and marches on the Pentagon, "You do not have to look into many American eyes to suddenly meet somewhere the beautiful, grave lunacy of (Don Quixote's) gaze."

Geoffrey Moore



Penelope Lively: consistently witty

Chess

THE grandmasters at the Kleinwort Greaveson British championship must renew battle in the autumn after a triple tie last weekend at Southampton. Chandler, Mestel and Speelman, the three top GM seeds, all scored 8/11, ahead of Flear and King on 7½, and seven players, notably 14-year-old Michael Adams, on 7.

Kleinwort Greaveson chief executive John Brew initiated the sponsorship, under the former name of Greaveson Grant, in 1980. With the generous prizes the championship has been well supported by our leading players, and the use of the Swiss playing system, a blend of an all-play-all and knock-out, has permitted large entries; there were 62 finalists at Southampton.

With this encouragement British chess has developed new generations of masters to an extent unrivalled anywhere outside the USSR. All the GM winners last week were silver medalists at the 1984 chess olympics. Snapping at their heels were the IMs in their early twenties, fast approaching GM standard; and teenagers making promising debuts were not far behind. Almost all the top dozen players were aged under 30, whereas title contests in rival nations have a distinctly middle-aged look.

In 1979 Nigel Short became an international master at 14 with brilliant performances at the British championship and Hastings. Adams, the new prodigy, faced nine GMs or IMs among his eleven opponents and, assessed on the FIDE rating scale, his performance of around 2,530 points is better even than Short's giant-killing feats. The only clearly superior results by any 14-year-old are Fischer's first US title win in 1958 and Becking's victory in the South American zonal in 1966.

Though the GMs at Southampton found it hard to prove their superiority against the younger masters, they were ruthless enough against untested youngsters. Speelman, the holder, played the best chess. White: J S Speelman. Black: E O M C Teichmann. English Opening.

1 P-Q4, B-N3? 2 P-KN3, P-Q3 3 P-Q4, B-N2 4 B-KB3, P-Q3 5 P-Q5, N-R4? 6 Q-R4 ch.

North dealt at love all and bid one spade. East overcalled with two clubs, and South said two diamonds. North's best rebid is, I think, three clubs, then South says three diamonds. South says four spades, North bids five hearts, and South goes to seven diamonds. What surprised me was that no pair hit even the small slam.

C. B. GREENFIELD: A LITTLE MADNESS
by Lucille Kalleen. Collins. £7.95, 208 pages

LATE PAYMENTS
by Michael T. Lewin. Macmillan. £8.50, 225 pages

AN OLD SCHOOL TIE
by Andrew Taylor. Gollancz. £8.95, 183 pages

THIS LATEST story about the small-town editor Greenfield and his Watson-girl, Friday Maggie Rome, is somewhat slow getting started, and the motive force—Maggie's jealousy—is weak for the amount of action

CRIME

it has to inspire. But once the milieu (an encampment of women peace-demonstrators) is solidly established, and once the murder occurs, Maggie drops her petulance and regains her old verve. A minor, but still welcome contribution to this agreeable series by Lucille Kalleen.

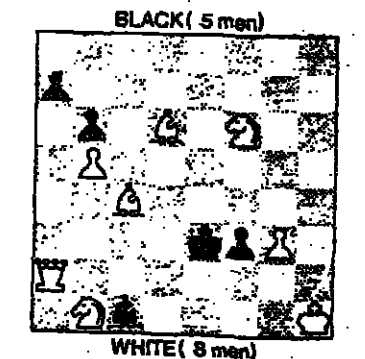
As his admirers will know from past volumes, Lieutenant Leroy Powder of the Indianapolis Missing Persons Bureau is a tough cookie; but his heart—pure gold—is in the

right place, and it guides his actions more often than his head does. In *Late Payments* he gets himself into trouble, but gets various others—including his delinquent son—out of it. Quirky, original, neatly told. Andrew Taylor's somewhat dogged William Dougal and his friend-antagonist, the disreputable James Hanbury, this time are on the same side, in an Old School Tie, investigating one murder (of Hanbury's wife) that leads to others, in the past and in the present. A thoroughly engaging story, set in a cathedral town.

William Weaver

(N-Q3): 19 B-B5, Q-B2 (now if N-Q3: 20 N-KP: B-N3; 21 P-B4); 20 B-Q4, Q-Q3; 21 N-KP, B-N3; 22 N-BP1: K-N3; 23 B-B5. Resigns.

If Q-Q2: 24 P-Q6 ch, K-B1; 25 R-K7 wins.



WHITE (5 men)

PROBLEM No 632
White mates in two moves, against a defence (by E. G. Laws). A classical problem, vintage 1885, when, despite White's long lead in material it takes an obscure move to force mate.

Solution Page XII

Leonard Barden

BRIDGE

MY FIRST hand today occurred in a duplicate pairs:

N. ♠ K 10 9 5 4
♥ A 4
♦ A 10 7 6
♣ A 4

W. ♠ 7
♥ 9 8 7 6 5 2
♦ 8 5
♣ 7 5 3 2

E. ♠ J 6 3 2
♥ K J 10
♦ J
♣ K J 10 9 8

North dealt at love all and bid one spade. East overcalled with two clubs, and South said two diamonds. North's best rebid is, I think, three clubs, then South says three diamonds. South says four spades, North bids five hearts, and South goes to seven diamonds. What surprised me was that no pair hit even the small slam.

discards on the second spade. He crosses to the ace of hearts—the Vienna coup—and runs three more diamonds. East is left with J 6 of spades, and his two kings. Now the last diamond turns the screw, and East is forced to throw one king. South leads the queen of that suit, and East resigns.

We turn to the Trump Coup:

N. ♠ A Q 8 7 2
♥ A Q 8 3
♦ A J 5 3

W. ♠ J 8 7 3
♥ 9 8
♦ 10 7 2
♣ 10 9 8 2

At game all North deals and bids one heart. South replies with two spades, and North rebids three diamonds. Now comes Blackwood, and South goes seven spades over his partner's response of five spades.

West leads the club ten, and South takes stock. If trumps break 3-2, there is no problem. If West holds four to the knave, there is nothing to be done, but if East has them, the contract can be salvaged by a trump coup. South's trumps must be shortened four times to reduce them to the same number as East's.

He wins the lead with dummy's ace (his king is not needed) and ruffs a club in hand. When he cashes ace and king of spades, he finds that East has the four trumps. To bring about the trump coup, South leads the heart three, and East takes it. He needs four trumps, three for purposes of ruffing and the fourth for the final entry to the table.

He leads the heart three, and finesses the queen—that finesse is essential—and after ruffing another club, he crosses to the heart ace, and ruffs the last club. He crosses to dummy via the diamond queen, ruffs a heart, and returns to the diamond ace. He leads a heart, and covers whatever card East plays.

E. P. C. Catter

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ARTS

Michael Coveney finds the internationalism of the Edinburgh Festival reflected in offerings from the fringe venues

The exotic and the erotic

EXCEPT for The Traverse, this year's Edinburgh Festival fringe programme has been light on native writing. But the internationalism of the official programme has been pleasingly reflected throughout the smaller venues, nowhere more prominently than at The Traverse itself, where the great Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa was on hand this week to welcome the British premiere of his complex, witty and absorbing sexual comedy *Kathie and the Hippopotamus* (translated by Kerry McKenny and Anthony Oliver-Smith).

The writer, Santiago, aka "Mark Grief", left his wife because he fell in love with one of his students, Kathie. Kathie in turn has abandoned her banker husband Juan, a promiscuous doer of the surf-board across the world from Hawaii to Wailiki. Kathie has travelled to Egypt and is documenting her experience, with the altering and transforming assistance of Santiago, into a fictional travelogue. Santiago's wife, Ana, sulks resentfully on the sidelines as the writer indulges his Victor Hugo sexual and literary fantasies having cast Kathie in the role of his Juliette Drouet.

It is a play brim full of dazzling conceit and confection, jumping backwards and forwards in time and is played, in Stephen Unwin's production, with enormous brio and pace. Robert Swann is the writer, a comic fantasist who has lived too long and too deeply in his special subject, the Golden Age of Spanish literature. Janet Amsden, a fine actress, is bristly and glibly pert as Kathie but she is not ideally equipped to suggest the luxuriance of a Lima socialite.

The text says a little in the second act but, in all, this is a fascinating insight into notions of fidelity and promiscuity in Latin America much closer to the lighter side of Llosa's fiction than to the imperious epic sweep of *The War at the End of the World*, one of the best novels I have ever read.



The fringe takes to the streets of Edinburgh—members of Oui 3 performing outside the Art Gallery

IF YOUR idea of the sound of Oxford in August is the splash of a punt pole, you may not relish the grinding buses in the High Street, the belated conversations of Texan summer-school students which echo through college quadrangles. Sweeter and far more intriguing sounds lie to the north, far from the bookers, hanging baskets and kebabs-stands, in the new music gallery of the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Man's tireless inventiveness in music-making is the theme of the larger of two permanent exhibitions at the new Balfour Building which opened in June. It is the first part of the long overdue expansion of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford University's collection of ethnography and prehistory. This much-loved museum is not only one of the six greatest ethnographic collections in the world, but a maverick as well.

When General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers gave his collection to the university in 1884, he stipulated that it must continue to be displayed according to his system, which was typological or thematic, not geographic, and looked decidedly out of date by then. Sadly, the system died thoroughly disgruntled, with Oxford's handling of his benefaction—so much so that the great wealth he inherited by adopting the surname Pitt Rivers went into a rival museum at Farnham. But thematic collection remains, and richly appreciated now as a museum of museology.



Playing the musical bow in Nigeria in 1930—from the Pitt Rivers Museum archive

So there is no need, for admirers of the Pitt Rivers, to fear the expansion; no modernising broom has swept out the gloriously over-stuffed cases. At South Parks Road, Mavungu the Nail Fetish still carries his smudged label at floor-height, reminding us of "the long tale of misery which hangs on every wall, a few minutes away in the music gallery on Banbury Road, the impression is still of fantastic jumble and the excitement of searching through old chests in an attic.

I have always thought the Pitt Rivers to be the first and best museum for children, and in the new gallery this is still more the case, because of the unique step in museum technology. However gaudy and bizarre, musical instruments seem a little melancholy behind glass. The curator has overcome this, not simply with an audio-visual display of instrument-making in Mali, but with headphones (free), which pick up short-wave radio commentary at each major division of cases.

A five-year-old I was watching clearly could not match what he saw to the bull-roarer at a Gambian circumcision ceremony which he was hearing. His grandmother should not have worried, since he loved dashing round amid a jumble of weird sounds. More mature visitors may find intriguing the colours used to divide up the instruments. A survey showed that people think of drums as red, strings as green, and wind as blue. The gallery itself is an unremarkable kiosk-based building, which can be added to

Treasure chest of ancestral voices

the museum's archives. A sad hurdy-hurdy player in an old Russian street plays with me still. However, music as entertainment even music as part of religious ritual, hardly begins the list. Among the whistles some are used to enforce authority, like the policeman's whistle, and the whistling arrows shot to tell the Chinese populace that the Emperor was coming, on whom they must not look. Similar ones were used at the Boxer Rising of 1901 to scare the British troops. A Sarawak bamboo whistle decorated ducks, and a Javanese whistle strapped to a pigeon's back would scare birds from the crops.

Then there is the great Swiss Alphorn, used to soothe cattle; the French "serenette," a baby barrel-organ used to teach song-birds tunes from operas; the conch-bell which a Fal-mouth fisherman used in fog until the Board of Trade outlawed them; the Jew's harp which in Assam and Switzer-land lovers left as tokens for their girls to pick up or spurn.

Music makes rain in one society, lures jaguars in another, and speaks with ancestral voices in tubes decorated with shells and public hair.

In every respect the Balfour music gallery is as fascinating as its parent, and in one respect as maddening. James Fenton began his powerful poem about the Pitt Rivers with the observation that it is shut 22 hours a day and all day Sunday. This frustrating fact puts in a rather different light the horror stories which British tourists like to tell about gallery closures on the continent.

One more warning is needed or you will never get to the Pitt Rivers. It lies back-to-back with the University Museum, in itself a splendid collection of bugs, bauxite and a dodo, in a ravishing building of Ruskinian Venetian Gothic. But you have only from 2 to 4 pm, not time enough to be sidetracked. You must stride firmly east from the sperm-whale's face, descend some steps. Then you are in General Pitt Rivers' magic kingdom, where the Hittite earth goddess rubs shoulders with an Eskimo Virgin Mary, and the shrunken head winks at the mummy.

Patricia Morison

Records

Music with a keyboard

Mozart: Piano concertos in D minor and C. Uchida, Tate/ECO. Philips 418 381-1 (also on cassette and compact disc). Debussy: *Préludes* (complete). Pour le piano. L'Espresso. Ousset. EMI EX 27 0432 3 (two disc; also on cassette and CD). Fauré: Piano music. Stott. Conifer CFC 138 (also on cassette).

Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov: Piano music. Fingerhut. Chandos ABRD 1171. Shostakovich: Suite and Concertino for 2 pianos. Khachatryan. Suite. Arutunian & Babadjanian: Armenian Rhapsody. Tanyel/Brown. Chandos ABRD 1175.

Prokofiev: Piano concertos nos 1, 4 & 5. Beroff, Masur/Leipzig Gewandhaus. EMI EX 29 0351 1 (also on cassette). Bach: Italian Concerto. English Suite no 6. 4 Duets. Tocatta in C minor. Hewitt. DG 419 218-1 (also on cassette and CD).

Franz Schmidt: Organ music. Barber. Hyperion A65179.

high noon, even "La Terrasse des audiences du clair de lune." On record that is still true. She keeps to a bold, extrovert scale, muscles braced and dynamic high. The suggestive titles that Debussy (and his wife) attached to the ends of the finished preludes are barely noticed, though in strictly musical terms Ousset is scrupulous about pace and proportion. The lustiest preludes go with tremendous verve (and so does the suite *Pour le piano*); the poetically introverted ones have to make do with prosaic good sense for the pianist—honest soul!

— is too polite to insist upon private ideas. Young Kathryn Stott's collection of the earlier Fauré—the latest pieces are the 6th Nocturne and the 5th Barcarolle—is a consistent pleasure, clean-angled and sensitively felt. Where Fauré's own tempo-markings tend toward no-nonsense *modéré*, Miss Stott leans toward Marguerite Long's more soulful pacing; occasionally the lavish (though delicate) feeling blurs Fauré's cool structures, but the spirit is faithfully rendered.

Another newcomer, Margaret Fingerhut, offers a welcome Russian programme devoted to the famous Five, the "mighty handful." It is tilted toward salon-scale (the less quirky Mussorgsky, the younger Balakirev, with tame old Cui represented by his high-romantic gestures for the later Rakhmaninov generation), but is still a valuable conspectus. Where a grander sweep is required, as in Balakirev's most Lisztian moments, Miss Fingerhut is equal to it. This is at once a history-lesson and an undemanding delight.

Also on Chandos, Jeremy Brown and Sets Tanyel offer sensible, thoroughly efficient accounts of Soviet two-piano music: the 15-year-old Shostakovich's precociously rich Suite op. 6 and the much later Concertino op. 94, some vigorous

Khachaturian and a Rhapsody by Armenian collaborators. If Prokofiev's First and his last two piano concertos (leaving the record-collector free to pick and choose among the mor numerous versions of the Second and Third), Miche Béroff is astute as well as brilliantly athletic, with Masur strong, faithful accompanist. The left-hand-only Fourth which Paul Wittgenstein com-missioned but would play (just as well, probably), sounds no only boldly agile but cogent; one of Prokofiev's odd serious rockets. When the Canadian Angel Hewitt appeared here after winning the International Becl Competition in Toronto, Dom inic Gull wrote enthusiastically: "after her. Her first DG record confirms the impression: crisp commanding Bach-playing of the piano, full of intelligence courting the label 'middle o the road' because she is neither so rhythmically dominating a Glenn Gould nor so exquisite personal as Andrés Schiff. In this case, the middle ground proves notably satisfying: it has the solid crunch of conviction not the calculated air of com promise.

Finally, a note for Fran Schmidt aficionados (I have no space to tell him to newcomers—I mean, those who have discovered his between-the-war symphonies and quintets, and recognise his voice as that o the last conservative Austro-German master. His piano works were all for the one armed Wittgenstein, but his own first instrument was the organ. "Traiane Barber does expert justice to seven Schmidt organ pieces, among them the impossibly extended *Prelude & Fugue in C*; everything beautifully made, and beyond that often affecting, as Schmidt tends to be—beyond any good reason: can it be that defiant loyalty to a dying tradition just is poignant?

David Murray

Radio

Dramatic accompaniment

PROMS OR no proms, Radio 3 has been generous with drama, or near-drama, over the week. The Death of Anton Webern on Monday was near-drama. The hasty shooting of the composer by American soldiers on a black-market drive was presented by John Thornley in poetic terms, an alternation of the American report, spoken in dry American, with extracts from Webern's writings, melodramatically delivered over music. I learnt little about the death of Anton Webern that I did not already know, either historically or emotionally.

Broad Daylight on Tuesday also relied on music, being written by a composer, Christopher Whelan. Edmund Wye (Alec McCowen), finds 18th-century graffiti in Cordoba recalling a love between Moorish Miguel and Jewish Anna. At the same time, the tale is duplicated between modern Alfonso and Eta-agent Magda. Mr Whelan's incidental music, if I may use the term, is virtually a symphonic commentary, generously orchestrated and conducted by the composer. It was all too sentimental for me; and what common script was used by Moor and Jew? Ronald Mason was the director.

On Friday we had Pinter's *Victoria Station*, the creepy dialogue with a minicab driver with an embarrassing load and to meet a train. It goes wonder-

fully well on radio, the mystery enhanced by the invisibility of both participants. John Tyde-man directed a pair of perfectly-timed performances by Martin Jarvis and Paul Rogers. Radio 4 gave us an admired wartime play on Saturday, Rodney Ackland's *The Dark River*, for which they allowed two hours. It is characteristic of its day (1942), dealing with the conflict of two men for the loyalty of a woman, and set in a Thames-side house full of the upper-middle-classes who inhabited the theatre at that time. Cathy, the woman, was splendidly played by Jane Asher; the two men, her ex-husband and her intended next, a manufacturer of air-raid shelters, were Andrew Branch and Dermot Crowley, and the director Matthew Walters.

And on Monday, *A Schoolboy Dreaming of Africa* by Chris Barlas, about a young VSO volunteer in an African territory on the verge of independence. He gets to know Ntoko, leader of the opposition, who is charged with the murder of Mrs Kelway, from a hidebound Afrikaner household. The Kelways, like everyone else in the script, are mock-up fictional African residents, but the country is recognisably Botswana, or his controller, who wants him rather Bechuanaland, complete with three words of Tswana dialogue, Francis Middleditch

was the VSO, and there was nice playing by Leo Winger as an African radio announcer and Alton Kumalo as Ntoko. As a rule I don't enjoy Dr Clara's in-depth interviews in the *Psychiatrist's Chair*, but Sir Michael Tippett was more amusing last Saturday than most "patients" are (and I suppose the programme is designed to amuse). "Christ, that's a good question!" Sir Michael responded to one barb. "I don't know, love." He sounded totally likeable, though possibly if he were in my chair I should find him too self-absorbed. We must have him on that Desert Island at once.

A different kind of character-reading showed in *The Black Sheep of the Family* (Radio 4, Saturday). Brian King's programme about the music-hall singer Fred Barnes. Were we to remember him for his stage charms, or for his drinking and his sexual deviation? We only heard his songs sung in a modern manner by Al and Dave Sealey, which cannot have given much idea of how they sounded at the Palladium. For all his vices, he was a popular hero. "Fred Barnes and me, we've got 'em, and no argument about it," said Alfred Lester in his sketch about the White Hope. But there, who remembers Alfred Lester either?

B. A. Young

Potteries' purpose-built

ARTHUR BERRY's play at the New Victoria Theatre in what we visitors think of as Stoke, but is actually Newcastle-under-Lyme, is built to the age-old pattern of Peter Cheeseman's productions, but the theatre is something new. From the outside, it is utterly unlike the old house in its converted cinema. The low octagonal red-brick building, standing in a generous tree-lined site given by Newcastle Borough, is a 20th century version of Shakespeare's Globe. But inside, in spite of all the glistening amenities, there is still a feeling of the friendly old house.

This is the first purpose-built theatre in the round we have, if you exclude the construction inside Manchester's Royal Exchange. The architects are Hollins, Jones, Oldacre and partners, and the cost was £2m, part contributed by the Arts Council, principally by various local authorities, a little still to be found.

At two levels, the circular auditorium is surrounded by all the facilities a theatre of this kind should provide. There is a bar and a restaurant at ground level and also at first-floor level. The only shortcoming I noticed was that programmes were sold only at a single table near the

the audience around me were programme-less. There are tiers of handsome and comfortable blue-upholstered seats all round the circular stage, at three levels. Some of the stage-level seats may be removed to make room for extra acting areas. And there is the possibility of housing a band in the seating area.

The play, *St George of Scotland*, is firmly in the Vic tradi-

B. A. Young at the first night of a new play at a brand new theatre in the round

tion. It is specifically aimed at Stoke audiences, and the manner suggests the kind of thing Arnold Bennett might have written if he had lived among pit-men rather than among publishers. The talk is the talk of the local people. Jokes are founded on local interests: "He loves Stoke City more than he loves me." "I love Port Vale more than her." The plot is a familiar story about the inheritance of a dead man's wealth. Enoch Wallwork has died be-

the funeral go off?" "Like all funerals—they put him in the hole and filled it in." This is a characteristic exchange, but in fact a lot of the play is written in doggerel verse, sung by the principals and supported by a small mixed-voice choir who slip in by one of the three entrances, to music by Stuart Johnson. Enoch's brother Albert ("a mean old man"), his wife Gertrude, his daughter Muriel, her idle husband Percy and their glue-sniffing son Duggie are the characters that matter. No need to describe the story in detail, which is mostly a series of comic episodes. There is an affair between Albert and Enoch's former mistress; there are two comic builders, one of whom turns out to be Albert's long lost illegitimate son. The author introduces two formerly unknown characters in the last 10 minutes, which is typical of his indifference to his plot-construction.

By the time we know as much about the plot as we have to, and have reckoned on whatever conclusions the author will wish on us—and he is a poor hand at ending an act—we are happy as long as the jokes go on. There is nothing much that can be seriously described as acting, but everyone, on stage and around it, is having a very good



Arthur Berry

WEEKEND FT

SPORT

Golf: Benson and Hedges International

The answer's not a lemon

DRESSED in lemon, Nick Faldo—the born-again swinger of English golf—strode assertively up the first fairway at Fulford this week as part of a continuing search for the touch and the magic that used to be his.

To be fatiguingly precise, the colour lemon did not manifest itself until the first round of the Benson and Hedges International Open was well under way. This was because Faldo teed off at 9.30 in spiteful rain, with the crowd cover almost brushing the poplars that line the first fairway.

As a result, Faldo started out in dark blue waterproofs, which only later gave way to one of those pastel Pringle sports sweaters he models so successfully. It was not until the 16th hole that the sun burst through, at which point Faldo shed the sweater to reveal a lemon-coloured shirt that instantly attracted a crowd of flying ants. "They think I'm a giant flower in this shirt," said Faldo kindly, which was greeted with wit, this being Yorkshire.

By this stage, Faldo was level par, as he had been since the 12th, where a second birdie of the morning had finally erased a faltering start that saw bogies at the par-four 2nd and the par-three 5th. Eventually, a birdie at the 18th—where an exalted class of person lunches noisily in private dining rooms behind transparent plastic screens—saw him finish one-under-par for an opening 71, which left him well down the field and was nothing to write home about, Fulford being meek.

His putting was not the main trouble, though he had been wickedly short of luck. Nor was it his approach work, which was off-key but sound. The trouble, almost certainly, stemmed from a continuing nagging worry about the effectiveness of his swing, which has not so much been tinkered with as completely rehabilitated over the past 15 months, under the exacting supervision of David Leadbetter, Faldo's Florida-based coach.



Nick Faldo: not quite in the swing

In short, Faldo has reconstructed his swing in an act of profound reappraisal that is possibly without parallel in all of professional sport.

How differently it all looked three years ago, when Faldo, while 29, was bracketed with Scotland's Sandy Lyle, Germany's Bernhard Langer, and Australia's Greg Norman as the game's leading non-Americans—excepting, as always, the King of Spain, Seve Ballesteros, who recently became the first man to win the European Tour title.

In 1983, Faldo won five European titles and was the leading European money-winner, having finished fourth, second and fourth in the preceding three years. His 1983 stroke average for 16 events, in 11 of which he was among the top 10 finishers, was 69.03, which the official European Tour Guide for 1986 describes, with nostalgia, as "truly amazing."

Nor was he quite finished, for in 1984 Faldo won the Sea Pines Heritage Classic, making him the first Briton since Tony Jacklin 12 years earlier to win a tour title on American soil. Then it all went pht.

In 1985, Faldo slumped to 42nd in the European Order of Merit, and to 118th on the US money list, for total official earnings of about \$66,000 from 26 starts. In other words: peanuts.

Because his game was tailing off, if not quite disintegrating, Faldo elected for drastic changes to his swing, arguing that whatever his success in 1983, he had not been enthralled with his striking or his flight.

"The difference between the old swing and the new one is massive," he said recently. "Previously it used to go inside and out. The basic change is in the plane: aiming to get a continuous plane rather than taking the club up too steeply. It's not so much as fanning open of the club face, though that's what it looks like, as a rotation of the arms." First, he got his backswing right. Then, Leadbetter told him that his downswing badly needed work.

On Thursday, at Fulford, Faldo hit a curious mixture of good new swings, poor old swings, poor new swings, and good old swings, or so it appeared, through the insects and rain, as Faldo struggled over the first five holes, where his driving off the tee found the

fairway only twice, before a marvellous tee shot at the 6th produced a birdie which helped him to level par. After that, he produced some largely excellent striking for the rest of the round.

At the 18th I spoke to him. He was not a jubilant man, nor a bundle of laughs. The reason was that his playing partners, the unconstructed Howard Clark and the unconstituted Greg Turner had played excellent golf of great unfussiness for scores of 66 and 67 respectively, which put them well in among the early leaders who included Mark James, Gordon Brand Junior, and Lee Trevino.

"There's few little things that still need working on," said Faldo defensively. "Sometimes it clicks, sometimes it doesn't, but my new swing is very close to being ready. I'll get there. It will all come together." He says he knows he's as good as Langer and Lyle, and that he's simply got to prove it by winning big events.

So far this year he's commuted between Europe and the US without making headlines. But don't colour him lemon. He played well at Turnberry, in the British Open, where he was fifth with 287—seven strokes behind Greg Norman, who won, one stroke behind Langer, one ahead of Ballesteros, and eight strokes ahead of Lyle, the defending champion.

And without any fanfare, Faldo is at present ninth on the European money list with winnings of \$53,402, the current leaders being Ballesteros, who is way out in front, Clark, Brand, Roger Davis and Ian Woosnam.

Faldo is playing in Europe for the next two months. Then it's back to the US before he visits Japan and Hawaii. That takes him to the middle of November, when he'll start a six-week break. Any day soon he'll be swinging in style and tearing up gold orders. But there is one thing he should do. He should burn that lemon shirt.

Michael Thompson-Noel

THERE WERE no rioting mobs in Worthing this week. Nobody kicked a police horse. Nobody was stabbed. And there was no one chundering into the municipal flower beds that light up the bowling greens of Beach House Park with tropical flashes of vermilion and gold.

In short, Worthing was once again host to that festival of decorum, the English Bowling Association's national championships, which punctuate the summer like the eye of a storm before the national blood sport of soccer reconvenes.

Not that Beach House Park was a quiet as the grave, for whatever their image, bowlers do get excited, and do jump and shout. Now and then applause breaks out, and the air is rent with cries of "There's a clever boy, Doug," and "You can do this, David," and "Lovely line, Trev."

In the main, though, bowls is serene and sedate, and attracts a ruddy-faced Dad's Army of exponents and supporters in brown shoes and blazers. As matches get underway, supporters lounge in deck chairs and peer from behind their telegraphs; for there are no Guardian readers here, thank you very much.

Despite its image, bowls attracts a fair quota of the young and thrusting, such as Gary Harrington, a jovial 24-year-old window and office cleaner who is an English international and skippered Oxfordshire in this year's fours. Next week he plays in the pairs and singles.

Last year Harrington was an indoor singles finalist, losing 21-20. Like the majority of bowlers he is virtually self-taught (he started when he was nine). He doesn't train doesn't

Rowing

John Bourne explains the cash crisis in a sport in which British competitors are among the world's best

A RECORD number of gold medals—and a looming cash crisis. This is so far the 1986 story of a famous international sport, which England gave to the world.

Ironically rowing in the UK is one of the last remnants of "amateurism." Men and women

Bowls

Jolly good show

Michael Thompson-Noel reports on the sedate pleasures of the bowls world

have a coach, doesn't have a sponsor (his costs are "terrible") but practices virtually every evening and is clearly addicted to a sport whose technical demands and nuances are considerable. For example, you don't just stand there and poodle around, but have to concentrate on grip, stance, delivery and follow-through, let alone the configuration of bowls at the other end, or the maths of impact and bias.

Two other likely lads are Chris Yelland, a solicitor, 38 next Tuesday, and Wynne Richards, a 36-year-old accountant.

Richards plays about 180 competitive games a year. In 1984 he won the English singles title but last year exited in the first



round. Despite that, he is a staunch defender of the traditional system whereby the Worthing singles finalists—number 70—have to take their chance in a field that originally numbered 15,000—the qualifying play-offs amounting to a test of nerve and stamina that often lays the mighty low and tosses champions out with the bath water.

This is typical of bowls, which stresses etiquette and sportsmanship and democratic values as virtues to be cherished, even though small-scale commercialism and TV exposure may have caused a slight blossoming of gamesmanship of late.

David Bryant, whose achievements in head-to-head singles

helped make him the king of the game as well as the world's first professional bowler, says the sport has good reason to thank its pioneers, who not only formulated the present rules but were largely responsible for introducing numerous unwritten laws which still form the game's etiquette.

"Always dress correctly for all games," says Bryant. "Compliment your opponent on a good bowl. Stand still when a player is about to bowl. Do not talk or make a noise behind the mat when a player is delivering. Keep to your own rank. Be aware of your shadow. Never criticise—only praise. Always appear that you are enjoying the game whatever the fortunes."

Bowls is still growing, says Jimmy Fims, an official of the EBA, which has 2,686 clubs and 121,000 affiliated members.

On average, the membership is growing by about 2,000 a year. Younger people are joining, though it is still very much a sport because of the virtual absence of professionalism. It is very democratic. You can't buy your way in. Bowlers are only interested in how you bowl, not who you are.

Abroad, lawn bowling flourishes most fiercely in New Zealand and Australia. In Sydney one evening I popped round to the local bowls club to be met by a ladder. There were no lady bowlers present, just a roomful of males in the grip of the grog, whose awe and wonder at the prospect of a "Pom up a ladder" triggered off obscene speculation.

There was nothing like that at Worthing. Nobody stole a policeman. Nobody was shot. It was almost not real.

Send for the lifeboat

These are contributions to the money Penny Chuter, Britain's director of international rowing, has for crews to line up against some of the fastest racing countries in the world. These include the US, Russia, East and West Germany, Italy, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Even then, she and her organisers at the Amateur Rowing Association look like heading for a budget deficit. In 1986-87 when the championships are a week tomorrow, and also facing worsening financial problems in the build-up to the next Olympic Games. After the 1984

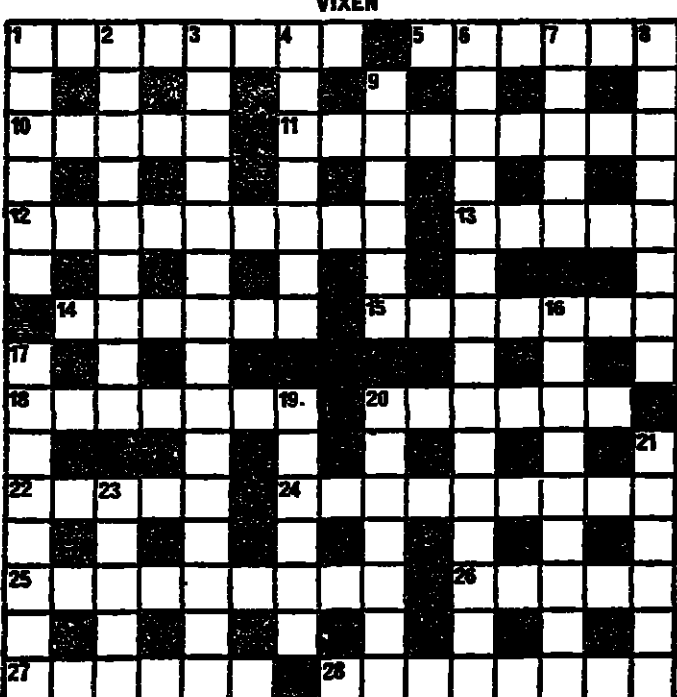
Games the sponsorship of National Westminster and British Home Stores ran out and this year the Sports Council contributed £180,000, while a further £150,000 came from the council to prepare some British sports events for the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

All this is unlikely to cover the bills, even though Miss Chuter has cut the number of events entered and the international regattas where Britain should compete. This year every competitor selected paid £25 for rowing in each European regatta.

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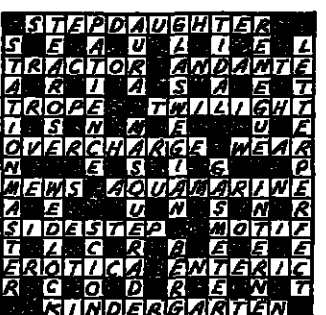
F.T. CROSSWORD PUZZLE No. 6,101



Prices of £10 each for the first five correct solutions opened. Solutions, to be received by next Thursday, marked Crossword on the envelope, to The Financial Times, 10 Cannon Street, London EC4A 3DF. Solution next Saturday.

ACROSS
1 Being firm about dreadful (English) (8)
2 Graduate copper going in for a computer (6)
3 Gave voice about a trainee's insult (5)
4 When a woman prepares for retirement, it's assumed (9)
5 Inapt time for getting snappy (9)
6 Held by college lecturers due to take up appointments (5)
7 A direction to stamp or run (6)
8 He'll assemble a large number and fool the monarch (7)
9 Once perhaps keeping a record for the city (7)
10 Call back to obtain a financial plan (6)
11 Gold tells in Paris, from all accounts (5)
12 "How happy is the... vestal's lot!" Pope (Eloisa to Abelard) (9)
13 Favors the manufacturer of finer beds (9)
14 The big-headed persons pointed out (5)
15 A hearing device Edward got (6)
16 An aristocrat about 50, quite without equal (8)

DOWN
1 Bear country (6)
2 Outstanding student of astronomy? (4, 5)
3 Instant industrial action maybe set girl thinking (9)
4 The colour of fellow's line (7)
5 A couple of gamblers improving all the time (6, 3, 6)
6 Stop up for the finish (5)
7 A rest's no change for politicians (8)
8 The woman getting a little handbag at half-price (6)
9 A dock-worker found to deserve breaks (9)
10 To wit the mob appears game (8)



SOLUTION AND WINNERS OF PUZZLE No. 6,095

Miss J. Birch, Stamford, Lincs; Mrs C. Dobrynski, Kirk Michael, Isle of Man; Mr Howard, Birchgrove, Swansea; Mrs E. Pilling, Blackpool, Lancs; Mr P. Platt, Warrington, Cheshire.

SATURDAY

1 indicates programme in black and white

BBC 1
8.30 am The Clinkers, 8.40 The Family-Ness, 8.45 The Saturday Picture Show, 10.05 Film: "The Treasure of Monte Cristo," starring Roy Calfoun, John Gresson and Peter Allen, 12.30 pm Grandstand, featuring 1.00 News, 2.00 News (World Championships), Racing from Newbury, Athletics (Berlin Grand Prix), Rallying (Ulster Rally) and Golf (Benson and Hedges International), 5.05 News, 5.15 Regional Programmes, 5.20 The Montreux Rock Festival, 6.10 The Duke of Hazard, 7.00 Sorry! 7.30 Film: "The Train Robbers" (John Wayne, Red Taylor and Ann Margaret star), 9.00 News and Sport, 9.15 Stanley Baxter's Christmas Hamper, 10.05 "Evita Peron" (Faye Dunaway and James Farentino star in a two-part, four-hour American mini-series), 11.40 Film: "Dirty Harry" (Clint Eastwood), (Peter Fonda and Susan George star).

BBC 2
11.55 pm Film: "A King in New York," starring Charlie Chaplin, 3.40 Film: "The Great Escape," starring Steve McQueen, 7.30 World Chess Report, 7.40 News, 7.50 World Chess Report, 8.00 News, 8.10 World Chess Report, 8.20 News, 8.30 World Chess Report, 8.40 News, 8.50 World Chess Report, 9.00 News, 9.10 World Chess Report, 9.20 News, 9.30 World Chess Report, 9.40 News, 9.50 World Chess Report, 10.00 News, 10.10 World Chess Report, 10.20 News, 10.30 World Chess Report, 10.40 News, 10.50 World Chess Report, 11.00 News, 11.10 World Chess Report, 11.20 News, 11.30 World Chess Report, 11.40 News, 11.50 World Chess Report, 12.00 News, 12.10 World Chess Report, 12.20 News, 12.30 World Chess Report, 12.40 News, 12.50 World Chess Report, 1.00 News, 1.10 World Chess Report, 1.20 News, 1.30 World Chess Report, 1.40 News, 1.50 World Chess Report, 2.00 News, 2.10 World Chess Report, 2.20 News, 2.30 World Chess Report, 2.40 News, 2.50 World Chess Report, 3.00 News, 3.10 World Chess Report, 3.20 News, 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